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The Riverside Literature Series

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON

BY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

EDITED BY

WILLIAM P. TRENT

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE can be little doubt that Lord Macaulay is the most popular writer of English prose that this century has produced. Thousands of copies of his *History of England* are still sold every year, and travellers tell us that if an Australian settler possesses three books only, the first two will be the Bible and Shakespeare, and the third, Macaulay's *Essays*. And yet his authority as a critic and historian has been shaken, and his capacity as a poet — for his *Lays of Ancient Rome* is a very popular book — seriously questioned. Nor is his popularity confined to any one circle of readers. Cultivated men and women in their conversation and writings assume a knowledge of his works as a matter of course, but the intelligent laboring man, who is striving for an education, is equally, perhaps more, familiar with them. It is plain that a writer who makes such a wide and lasting appeal deserves careful study, and that a brief survey of his life cannot be without interest.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born October 25, 1800, at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire. His father Zachary was a Scotchman of probity and talents, who was a distinguished promoter of abolition. Macaulay, therefore, came honestly by the middle-class virtues and defects that are so salient in his character. He was a precocious, nay rather a wonderful child, but does not appear to have been spoiled. His memory was prodigious and his reading enormous, while his faculty for turning out hundreds of respectable verses was simply phenomenal. After a happy period of schooling he entered Cambridge, where he won prizes for verse, and made a reputation for himself as a scholar and speaker, but failed of the highest honors on

account of his inaptitude for mathematics. He graduated at twenty-two, was elected a Fellow of Trinity two years later, and the next year startled the world by his brilliant essay on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review*. From this time his career was one of almost unbroken success. He was called to the bar in 1826, but gave more time to his writing and to his political aspirations than to his profession. In 1830 he was elected to the House of Commons through the patronage of Lord Lansdowne, and began his career as a staunch Whig at one of the most important crises in English history, — that of the first Reform Bill.

It is quite plain that if Macaulay had taken seriously to politics at this juncture he would have made a name for himself among English statesmen, or at least among English orators. The speeches he delivered were enthusiastically received, he stood high with the ministers of a party just coming into power, he had the courage of his convictions, he had the wide erudition that has been a tradition with English statesmen, and he had the practical ability to conduct a political canvass (for the new borough of Leeds); but he liked the adulation of society a little too well, and his income was not sufficient to let him bide his time. Dinners at Holland House and breakfasts with Rogers were delightful, no doubt, as delightful as the letters in which he described them to his favorite sister Hannah; and so too was the praise he got for his articles in the *Edinburgh;* but this devotion to society and literature could hardly have been kept up along with an entirely serious and absorbing pursuit of political honors. He was probably well advised, therefore, when in 1834 he accepted the presidency of a new law commission for India and a membership of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. It meant banishment, but it meant also a princely income of which half could be saved. So he set out, taking his sister Hannah with him, for he was a bachelor, discharged his duties admirably, and returned to England in 1838.

On his return he reëntered Parliament and served with distinction but not with conspicuous success. His genius had been diverted and his desires were more than ever divided. He obtained a seat in Lord John Russell's cabinet and supported the Whigs on all great questions, but he was better known as the author of the *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) and the *Essays*. He lost his seat for Edinburgh in 1847, having been too outspoken and liberal in his views, yet this meant little to one who was a student by nature and who was about to bring out the first two volumes of the most popular history ever written (1849). The remaining decade of his life was practically the only period in which his energies were undivided. He was indeed reëlected to Parliament from Edinburgh without his solicitation, and he was raised to the peerage in 1857, being the first man to receive such an honor mainly for literary work; but he did little besides labor on his *History* and make notable contributions to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Other honors of various sorts were showered on him and his fame reached the proportions of Byron's, but his health began to fail and he did not live long enough to experience any reaction. He died of heart trouble on December 28, 1859, in the fulness of his intellectual powers, and leaving his great history incomplete.

The chief reasons for Macaulay's tremendous popularity are not far to seek. He possessed a style which whether metallic, as has been claimed, or not, is at all times clear and strenuous. He simply commanded attention by his positive assurance of statement, and, when once he had obtained it, took care not to lose it through any obscurity. Rather than indulge in qualifications that might embarrass the reader, he chose, it may be unconsciously, to state half truths as whole truths, and to play the advocate while posing as the critic. The world has always loved the man who knows his own mind, and Macaulay knew his and proclaimed the fact loudly. Then again the world has always loved the strong man who is not too far aloof from it to

hold many of its prejudices and opinions. This was just the case with Macaulay, who was little more than a middle-class Englishman with vastly magnified powers. Subtlety of intellect and delicacy of taste were as far from him as they have always been from a majority of his countrymen, but dogmatic assurance and optimistic confidence in whatever was English were his in full measure. The very qualities that made Tennyson for a long time eclipse Browning made Macaulay eclipse Carlyle, and in both cases a natural reaction set in. Critics called attention to the artificial balance of Macaulay's sentences, and to the brazen ring of his verses; they pointed out his blindness to much that is highest and purest in literature; they convicted him of partisanship and made short work of his assumptions of omniscience. In all this they had considerable truth on their side, but as was natural they went to extremes, and the pendulum of opinion is now swinging in Macaulay's direction again. Mr. Matthew Arnold was right when he insisted on Macaulay's middle-class limitations, but he went too far when he practically denied that Macaulay had any claim to the title of poet. Schoolboys and older readers have not been entirely deluded when they have been carried away by the swing of *Ivry* and of *Horatius*. The essay on Milton has done good to thousands of readers, though its critical value is slight in the extreme. The third chapter of the *History*, describing the England of 1685, remains one of the most brilliant pieces of historical narration ever penned, no matter how partisan Macaulay may have been in the remainder of the work. However much his assumptions of omniscience may vex us, we must perforce admit that no modern specialist has ever known his peculiar subject better than Macaulay knew his chosen period of history, the reigns of James II. and William III. Theorize as much as we will about the pellucid beauties of an unelaborated style, we must confess that if the object of writing be to reach and influence men, Macaulay's balanced,

antithetical style is one of the most perfect instruments of expression ever made use of by speaker or writer. We may complain that Macaulay often leaves his subject and wanders off into space, but we have to confess with Mr. Saintsbury that he is one of the greatest stimulators of other minds that ever lived. In short we must conclude that although the brilliant historian and essayist has no such claim to our veneration as a great poet like Wordsworth, or a great novelist like Scott, or a great prophet like Carlyle, nevertheless his place is with the honored names of literature, and his fame is no proper subject for carping and ungenerous criticism.

With regard now to his individual works the highest praise must of course be given to his *History*. In spite of its incompleteness and its partisan character it is plainly one of the most notable of the world's historical compositions. It yields to the great work of Gibbon, but it would be hard to name any other history in English that is its superior in what is after all the essential point, the art of narration. Macaulay claimed that his favorite Addison might have written a great novel, but the claim might better be made for Macaulay himself, since he was a born story teller. Unkind critics have intimated that he drew upon his imagination for his characters, and the public has always confessed that the *History* is as interesting as a novel. We shall not, however, go so far as to maintain that the *History* is a novel or that Lord Macaulay was a great novelist spoiled; but we are at liberty to contend that the great secret of the historian's success lay in his comprehension of the fact that to make the past really live it must be treated in much the same way in which a novelist would treat the materials gathered for his story.

Perhaps enough has been said about our author's scanty poetry, which appeals chiefly through its swing and vigor, but the *Essays* will naturally demand somewhat fuller treatment. Their main value lies probably in the stimulation they give to the intellectual powers of any reader who

has a spark of literary appreciation or the slightest desire to learn. Macaulay's erudition is so great and he wears it so lightly that one is instinctively led to wish for a similar mental equipment, and to fancy that it cannot be very difficult of attainment. Whatever Macaulay likes is described in such alluring terms that a reader feels that it would really be too bad for him not to know more about it. The truth of this statement is amusingly illustrated by an anecdote, given in the *Life and Letters*, of a gentleman who after reading the review of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* sent a servant after the book. Macaulay was sitting near him in the library of the Athenæum Club and enjoyed the incident. But, besides their alluring style and their power of mental stimulation, the *Essays* have the advantage of treating in the main great subjects that people wish to know about, and treating them in such a way as to impart a large amount of compact and very useful information. Perhaps this is the chief reason why men who are self-educated are so familiar with Macaulay. Such readers care very little for the nicer shadings of criticism, but they do care a great deal to have available information and positive opinions furnished them on the great men and events of the past. Hence Macaulay's essay on Bacon will survive the monumental answer that Mr. Spedding gave it; hence his essays on Clive and Warren Hastings will for generations supply the public with all the Indian history it is likely to demand.

After the *Milton* Macaulay wrote about forty essays, all of which appeared in the *Edinburgh* except the five contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. They fall into two main classes, literary and historical, with a few of miscellaneous character, such as that on Sadler's *Law of Population*. It is a striking proof of Macaulay's genius that they are nearly all as well worth reading to-day as they were when they appeared between the yellow and blue covers. As a rule a review is unreadable a few years after its appearance, as is proved by the dust that settles upon the volumes of such contemporaries of Macaulay's as Mack-

intosh and Talfourd. Their reviews were duly collected into volumes and they were included with Macaulay among the "British Essayists," but they are dead while Macaulay lives. The quarterlies are still published, and their ponderous reviews are read by leisurely people, and immediately forgotten, for there is no form of literature that has less vitality. Yet Macaulay's reviews are still read by thousands and keep alive the names of books and men that would else have long since perished. It is a remarkable literary phenomenon. While Macaulay did not originate the discursive literary review, he first gave it life and popularity, and may be compared to a trunk that puts forth many branches. But the branches are all dead or dying, while the trunk seems to be endowed with perpetual life and vigor. Explain it as we may, the fact remains that the essays on Clive and Pitt and Warren Hastings, on Milton and Addison and Johnson, on Barère and Mr. Robert Montgomery's Poems, although belonging by nature to the most ephemeral category of literature, are as fully entitled to be called classics as any compositions written in the English language during the present century.

Four of the best of these classical essays form the basis of this collection, and a careful study of them with the aid of the introductions and notes will initiate the student into much of the secret of Macaulay's power and charm. He should not, however, rest content with them, but should read at least most of the *Essays* and the poems, and should then go on to complete the five volumes of the *History*. Even then he will not have all of Macaulay, for the two delightful volumes of the *Life and Letters*, edited by Mr. Trevelyan, will remain to be enjoyed. Mr. Cotter Morison's excellent biography in the *English Men of Letters* will also be found worth perusing, and if a good analysis of the style of the great essayist be wanted, it can be had in a chapter of Professor Minto's well known *Manual of English Prose Literature*.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON.

PREFATORY NOTE.

This elaborate essay appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1843. It was nominally a review of Miss Aikin's *Life of Joseph Addison*, but was really a tribute of Macaulay's own to the character and attainments of a man whom he heartily admired. Its rank among the literary essays is high, but after all it reaches only a half-way position between the youthful exaggeration and *élan* of the essay on Milton, and the chastened strength of the essay on Johnson. Considered merely from the point of view of style, it is, of course, worthy of high praise; but from the point of view of criticism, it is fairly subject to severe animadversion. Macaulay commits the common error of imagining, or seeming to imagine, that he cannot do justice to one man of genius without running down all who may be regarded as his competitors. So in our own day the lovers of Shelley seem to consider themselves obliged to act toward Lord Byron. But such partisanship is foreign to the truly catholic critic; and however much we may admire the splendid service that Macaulay was always willing and able to render to the men and causes he admired, we must never forget that his real function was that of an advocate, not of a critic. In the case of Addison the exaggerated note in Macaulay's praise was probably due, as Matthew Arnold has pointed out, to his own inability to see where his favorite writer fell short as a moralist, a critic, and a man. With all his scholarship and all his travel, Macaulay remained at bottom a middle-class Englishman, and therefore the commonplace character of much of Addison's work as a moralist and a critic did not strike him. These same middle-class prejudices also blinded him to the coldness, the formal correctness, that make Addison's character unattractive to many people, while at the same time they rendered him utterly incapable of appreciating the magnetic charm of the far from cold

and correct Steele. In short, the essay on Addison suffers greatly from the defects of its author's qualities, and, unlike the tribute to Milton, is not aggressive enough in its partisanship to sweep the reader away. Nevertheless, when all is said, Macaulay's virtues here, as elsewhere, outweigh his faults, and there are few essays in our language that so well repay careful study on the part of the reader who desires to be stimulated toward the attainment of a wider culture.

With regard to Addison little need be said. That he is not a profound moralist, that he is a conventional rather than a subtle critic, has been discovered by many a reader who did not have Matthew Arnold to guide him; but if this reader has not also discovered that for playful humor and humane satire, Joseph Addison has not his equal in English literature, he should at once throw down his huge modern daily and turn to those short periodical essays that once formed a necessary accompaniment of every fashionable London breakfast. Whether Addison might have made himself the greatest of English novelists, as Macaulay avers, is more than doubtful; but that he did make himself one of the most graceful and fascinating of essayists, is hardly matter for discussion. One might as well deny the greatness of Meissonier as a genre painter as to deny that of Addison as a writer of sympathetic character sketches, of playful satires, of gracefully imaginative allegories. But Meissonier is not a Rembrandt, and Addison is not a Balzac or a Fielding. Yet to be the Addison who described Sir Roger's death and conceived *The Vision of Mirza* is glory enough for one man. If now the student or general reader wish to become better acquainted with this true though limited genius, he need have no difficulty in obtaining proper helps. For the entire works, Greene's edition is probably to be preferred; for *The Spectator* alone, Professor Morley's. The *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* may be had separately in the *Riverside Literature Series;* and *The Tatler, The Guardian*, and the other periodicals are all included in Chalmers's *British Essayists*. The most recent biography is Mr. Courthope's in the *English Men of Letters*, but the lives of Steele by Aitken and Austin Dobson must also be consulted. For criticism one will naturally go to the histories of English literature and to Thackeray's *English Humorists*. Hare's *Walks in Rome* and the same author's *Walks in London* will clear up any topographical doubts. The names of German writers which appear may be further explained by reference to Wells's *Modern German Literature*.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON.

Some reviewers are of opinion that a lady who dares to publish a book renounces by that act the franchises appertaining to her sex, and can claim no exemption from the utmost rigor of critical procedure. From that opinion we dissent. We admit, indeed, that, in a country which boasts of many female writers eminently qualified by their talents and acquirements to influence the public mind, it would be of most pernicious consequence that inaccurate history or unsound philosophy should be suffered to pass uncensured, merely because the offender chanced to be a lady. But we conceive that, on such occasions, a critic would do well to imitate the courteous knight who found himself compelled by duty to keep the lists against Bradamante. He, we are told, defended successfully the cause of which he was the champion, but, before the fight began, exchanged Balisarda for a less deadly sword, of which he carefully blunted the point and edge.[1]

Nor are the immunities of sex the only immunities which Miss Aikin[2] may rightfully plead. Several of

[1] See Ariosto's (1474–1533) *Orlando Furioso*, xlv. 68. The courteous knight was Ruggiero. With Balisarda compare the names of other famous swords, — *e. g.*, Arthur's Excalibur, Hrunting (*Beowulf*), etc.

[2] Miss Lucy Aikin (1781–1864) was a daughter of Dr. John Aikin, a well-known critic and compiler, and a sister of the bet-

her works, and especially the very pleasing "Memoirs of the Court of King James I.," have fully entitled her to the privileges enjoyed by good writers. One of those privileges we hold to be this: that such writers, when, either from the unlucky choice of a subject or from the indolence too often produced by success, they happen to fail, shall not be subjected to the severe discipline which it is sometimes necessary to inflict upon dunces and impostors,[1] but shall merely be reminded by a gentle touch, like that with which the Laputan flapper[2] roused his dreaming lord, that it is high time to wake.

Our readers will probably infer from what we have said that Miss Aikin's book has disappointed us. The truth is, that she is not well acquainted with her subject. No person who is not familiar with the political and literary history of England during the reigns of William III., of Anne, and of George I., can possibly write a good life of Addison. Now, we mean no reproach to Miss Aikin, and many will think that we pay her a compliment when we say that her studies have taken a different direction. She is better acquainted with Shakespeare and Raleigh than with Congreve and Prior, and is far more at home among the ruffs and peaked beards of Theobald's[3] than among the Steenkirks[4] and flowing periwigs which

ter known Mrs. Barbauld. She wrote memoirs of the courts of Elizabeth and Charles I., besides the work mentioned in the text.

[1] Macaulay is probably alluding to his celebrated scathing review of Mr. Robert Montgomery's poems, which appeared in the *Edinburgh* for April, 1830.

[2] See *Gulliver's Travels*, Laputa, chap. ii.

[3] The country-seat of Elizabeth's famous minister, William Cecil, Lord Burleigh (1520–1598.)

[4] Loose cravats of fine lace, so called because they came into fashion after the defeat of William III. at Steenkirk, in Holland.

surrounded Queen Anne's tea-table at Hampton.[1] She seems to have written about the Elizabethan age, because she had read much about it; she seems, on the other hand, to have read a little about the age of Addison, because she had determined to write about it. The consequence is, that she has had to describe men and things without having either a correct or a vivid idea of them, and that she has often fallen into errors of a very serious kind. The reputation which Miss Aikin has justly earned stands so high, and the charm of Addison's letters is so great, that a second edition of this work may probably be required. If so, we hope that every paragraph will be revised, and that every date and fact about which there can be the smallest doubt will be carefully verified.

To Addison himself we are bound by a sentiment as much like affection as any sentiment can be which is inspired by one who has been sleeping a hundred and twenty years in Westminster Abbey. We trust, however, that this feeling will not betray us into that abject idolatry which we have often had occasion to reprehend in others,[2] and which seldom fails to make both the idolater and the idol ridiculous. A man of genius and virtue is but a man. All his powers cannot be equally developed, nor can we expect from him perfect self-knowledge. We need not, therefore, hesitate to admit that Addison has left us some compositions which do not rise above mediocrity, some heroic poems hardly equal to Parnell's,[3] some criticism

[1] Hampton Court, built by Wolsey, a favorite residence of English sovereigns.

[2] See for example the review of Dr. Nares's *Memoirs of Burleigh* in the *Edinburgh* for April, 1832.

[3] Thomas Parnell (1679–1717), a poet chiefly remembered for his *Hermit*. "Heroic poems" must mean poems in the heroic

as superficial as Dr. Blair's,[1] and a tragedy not very much better than Dr. Johnson's.[2] It is praise enough to say of a writer that, in a high department of literature in which many eminent writers have distinguished themselves, he has had no equal; and this may with strict justice be said of Addison.

As a man he may not have deserved the adoration which he received from those who, bewitched by his fascinating society, and indebted for all the comforts of life to his generous and delicate friendship, worshiped him nightly in his favorite temple at Button's.[3] But, after full inquiry and impartial reflection, we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race. Some blemishes may undoubtedly be detected in his character; but the more carefully it is examined, the more will it appear, to use the phrase of the old anatomists, sound in the noble parts, free from all taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, of envy. Men may easily be named in whom some particular good disposition has been more conspicuous than in Addison. But the just harmony of qualities, the exact temper between the stern and the humane virtues, the habitual observance of every law, not only of moral rectitude, but of moral grace and dignity, distinguish him from all men who have been tried by

couplet. (See page 107, note 2.) The *Campaign* is heroic in matter as well, but Parnell wrote nothing to which it could well be compared in this respect.

[1] Dr. Hugh Blair (1718–1800), a Scotch divine whose treatise on Rhetoric was once a noted book and is still worth examination.

[2] *Irene.* See the essay on Johnson, page 27.

[3] For this noted coffee-house, see the essay on Johnson, page 57, note 2; and Greene's note to *Spectator* No. 1.

equally strong temptations, and about whose conduct we possess equally full information.

His father was the Rev. Lancelot Addison, who, though eclipsed by his more celebrated son, made some figure in the world, and occupies with credit two folio pages in the "Biographia Britannica."[1] Lancelot was sent up, as a poor scholar, from Westmoreland to Queen's College, Oxford, in the time of the Commonwealth; made some progress in learning; became, like most of his fellow-students, a violent Royalist; lampooned the heads of the university, and was forced to ask pardon on his bended knees. When he had left college, he earned a humble subsistence by reading the liturgy of the fallen church to the families of those sturdy squires whose manor houses were scattered over the Wild of Sussex.[2] After the Restoration, his loyalty was rewarded with the post of chaplain to the garrison of Dunkirk.[3] When Dunkirk was sold to France, he lost his employment. But Tangier had been ceded by Portugal to England as a part of the marriage portion of the Infanta[4] Catharine; and to Tangier Lancelot Addison was sent. A more miserable situation can hardly be conceived. It was difficult to say whether the unfortunate settlers were more tormented by the heats or

[1] Appeared in seven folio volumes between 1747 and 1766, the first important undertaking of its kind in Great Britain.

[2] Wild, *i. e.*, Weald. See *Encyclopædia Britannica s. v.* "Sussex" for an account of the district.

[3] Dunkirk, a seaport of France, ceded to Cromwell in 1658, and ceded back by Charles II. in 1667, to the great disgust of his people.

[4] *Infanta* is the title applied to Spanish or Portuguese princesses of the blood royal. Here Catharine of Braganza, who married Charles II. in 1662.

by the rains; by the soldiers within the wall, or by the Moors without it. One advantage the chaplain had. He enjoyed an excellent opportunity of studying the history and manners of Jews and Mohammedans; and of this opportunity he appears to have made excellent use. On his return to England, after some years of banishment, he published an interesting volume on the Polity and Religion of Barbary, and another on the Hebrew Customs and the State of Rabbinical Learning. He rose to eminence in his profession, and became one of the royal chaplains, a doctor of divinity, Archdeacon of Salisbury, and Dean of Lichfield. It is said that he would have been made a bishop after the Revolution, if he had not given offense to the government by strenuously opposing, in the Convocation of 1689, the liberal policy of William and Tillotson.[1]

In 1672, not long after Dr. Addison's return from Tangier, his son Joseph was born.[2] Of Joseph's childhood we know little. He learned his rudiments at schools in his father's neighborhood, and was then sent to the Charter House.[3] The anecdotes which are popularly related about his boyish tricks do not harmonize very well with what we know of his riper years. There remains a tradition that he was the ringleader in a barring-out; and another tradition that he ran away from school, and hid himself in a

[1] John Tillotson (1630–1694), made Archbishop of Canterbury by William III., was noted for his moderation and the eloquence of his sermons, which were long read and admired.

[2] May 1st, at Milston in Wilts.

[3] Charter House — a famous charity consisting of a hospital, chapel, and school, founded in 1611. Among its noted scholars, besides Addison and Steele, have been Blackstone, Grote, Thackeray, Thirlwall, and John Wesley.

wood, where he fed on berries and slept in a hollow tree, till, after a long search, he was discovered and brought home. If these stories be true, it would be curious to know by what moral discipline so mutinous and enterprising a lad was transformed into the gentlest and most modest of men.

We have abundant proof that, whatever Joseph's pranks may have been, he pursued his studies vigorously and successfully. At fifteen he was not only fit for the university, but carried thither a classical taste and a stock of learning which would have done honor to a master of arts. He was entered at Queen's College, Oxford; but he had not been many months there when some of his Latin verses fell by accident into the hands of Dr. Lancaster,[1] Dean of Magdalen College. The young scholar's diction and versification were already such as veteran professors might envy. Dr. Lancaster was desirous to serve a boy of such promise; nor was an opportunity long wanting. The Revolution had just taken place, and nowhere had it been hailed with more delight than at Magdalen College. That great and opulent corporation had been treated by James, and by his chancellor,[2] with an insolence and injustice which, even in such a prince and in such a minister, may justly excite amazement, and which had done more than even the prosecution of the bishops to alienate the Church of

[1] Dr. William Lancaster (1650–1711) seems to have been afterwards Provost of Queen's College, but not Dean of Magdalen.

[2] The infamous Judge Jeffreys (1648–1689), noted for his cruelty and brutality. For the treatment of Magdalen College (founded in 1466, pronounced *Maudlin*), and the famous trial and acquittal of the seven Bishops who in 1687 refused to read in their churches James's declaration of indulgence, see Macaulay's *History*, chap. viii.

England from the throne. A president[1] duly elected had been violently expelled from his dwelling; a Papist[2] had been set over the society by a royal mandate; the fellows who, in conformity with their oaths, had refused to submit to this usurper, had been driven forth from their quiet cloisters and gardens to die of want, or to live on charity. But the day of redress and retribution speedily came. The intruders were ejected; the venerable house was again inhabited by its old inmates; learning flourished under the rule of the wise and virtuous Hough; and with learning was united a mild and liberal spirit too often wanting in the princely colleges of Oxford. In consequence of the troubles through which the society had passed, there had been no valid election of new members during the year 1688. In 1689, therefore, there was twice the ordinary number of vacancies; and thus Dr. Lancaster found it easy to procure for his young friend admittance to the advantages of a foundation then generally esteemed the wealthiest in Europe.

At Magdalen, Addison resided during ten years. He was at first one of those scholars who are called "Demies,"[3] but was subsequently elected a fellow. His college is still proud of his name; his portrait still hangs in the hall; and strangers are still told that his favorite walk was under the elms which fringe the meadow on the banks of the Cherwell. It is said, and is highly probable, that he was distin-

[1] John Hough (1651–1743), Bishop successively of Oxford, Lichfield, and Worcester.

[2] James first tried to force a wretched person named Anthony Farmer on the college. Afterwards he recommended Parker, Bishop of Oxford, who was not an avowed Papist.

[3] *Demies* — the name seems to be peculiar to the holders of certain scholarships at Magdalen — half-fellows.

guished among his fellow-students by the delicacy of his feelings, by the shyness of his manners, and by the assiduity with which he often prolonged his studies far into the night. It is certain that his reputation for ability and learning stood high. Many years later the ancient doctors of Magdalen continued to talk in their common room of his boyish compositions, and expressed their sorrow that no copy of exercises so remarkable had been preserved.

It is proper, however, to remark that Miss Aikin has committed the error, very pardonable in a lady, of overrating Addison's classical attainments. In one department of learning, indeed, his proficiency was such as it is hardly possible to overrate. His knowledge of the Latin poets, from Lucretius and Catullus down to Claudian and Prudentius,[1] was singularly exact and profound. He understood them thoroughly, entered into their spirit, and had the finest and most discriminating perception of all their peculiarities of style and melody; nay, he copied their manner with admirable skill, and surpassed, we think, all their British imitators who had preceded him, Buchanan[2] and Milton alone excepted. This is high praise; and beyond this we cannot with justice go.

[1] Lucretius (95–55 B. C.) and Catullus (86–46 B. C.) represent the better and earlier Latin poets; Claudian and Prudentius (fourth century A. D.), the latest and less worthy.

[2] George Buchanan (1506–1582), one of the greatest of the early writers of Scotland, was tutor to Mary, Queen of Scots (whose life he wrote in Latin), and to her son James VI., afterwards the pedant king of England. He was prominent in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of his troubled period, and left behind a large body of writings, of which his Latin poems and his Paraphrase of the Psalms are best remembered. Milton thought very highly of him.

It is clear that Addison's serious attention during his residence at the university was almost entirely concentrated on Latin poetry, and that, if he did not wholly neglect other provinces of ancient literature, he vouchsafed to them only a cursory glance. He does not appear to have attained more than an ordinary acquaintance with the political and moral writers of Rome; nor was his own Latin prose by any means equal to his Latin verse. His knowledge of Greek, though doubtless such as was in his time thought respectable at Oxford, was evidently less than that which many lads now carry away every year from Eton and Rugby. A minute examination of his works, if we had time to make such an examination, would fully bear out these remarks. We will briefly advert to a few of the facts on which our judgment is grounded.

Great praise is due to the notes which Addison appended to his version of the second and third books of the "Metamorphoses." Yet those notes, while they show him to have been in his own domain an accomplished scholar, show also how confined that domain was. They are rich in apposite references to Virgil, Statius,[1] and Claudian, but they contain not a single illustration drawn from the Greek poets. Now if, in the whole compass of Latin literature, there be a passage which stands in need of illustration drawn from the Greek poets, it is the story of Pentheus in the third book of the "Metamorphoses." Ovid was indebted for that story to Euripides and Theocritus,[2] both of whom he has sometimes followed

[1] P. Papinius Statius (61–96 A. D.), author of the *Thebais*.

[2] See Mahaffy's *History of Classical Greek Literature* and the Introduction to Lang's *Theocritus*.

minutely. But neither to Euripides nor to Theocritus does Addison make the faintest allusion; and we therefore believe that we do not wrong him by supposing that he had little or no knowledge of their works.

His travels in Italy, again, abound with classical quotations happily introduced; but scarcely one of those quotations is in prose. He draws more illustrations from Ausonius and Manilius [1] than from Cicero. Even his notions of the political and military affairs of the Romans seem to be derived from poets and poetasters. Spots made memorable by events which have changed the destinies of the world, and which have been worthily recorded by great historians, bring to his mind only scraps of some ancient versifier. In the gorge of the Apennines he naturally remembers the hardships which Hannibal's army endured, and proceeds to cite, not the authentic narrative of Polybius, not the picturesque narrative of Livy, but the languid hexameters of Silius Italicus. On the banks of the Rubicon he never thinks of Plutarch's lively description, or of the stern conciseness of the Commentaries, or of those Letters to Atticus which so forcibly express the alternations of hope and fear in a sensitive mind at a great crisis. His only authority for the events of the civil war is Lucan.[2]

[1] D. Magnus Ausonius (fourth century A. D.) and Caius Manilius (first century A. D.), minor and obscure Latin poets, the first named, however, being occasionally read and referred to.

[2] Of the names mentioned in this passage the student will be familiar with those of Hannibal, Livy, and Plutarch; he will at once connect the Rubicon and the Commentaries with Cæsar and the Letters with Cicero; Polybius he should remember as the Greek historian, born just before the defeat of Hannibal at Zama, and hence much more of an authority than Silius Italicus,

All the best ancient works of art at Rome and Florence are Greek. Addison saw them, however, without recalling one single verse of Pindar, of Callimachus, or of the Attic dramatists;[1] but they brought to his recollection innumerable passages of Horace, Juvenal, Statius, and Ovid.

The same may be said of the treatise on medals. In that pleasing work we find about three hundred passages extracted with great judgment from the Roman poets; but we do not recollect a single passage taken from any Roman orator or historian, and we are confident that not a line is quoted from any Greek writer. No person who had derived all his information on the subject of medals from Addison would suspect that the Greek coins were in historical interest equal, and in beauty of execution far superior, to those of Rome.

If it were necessary to find any further proof that Addison's classical knowledge was confined within narrow limits, that proof would be furnished by his "Essay on the Evidences of Christianity."[2] The Roman poets throw little or no light on the literary and historical questions which he is under the necessity of examining in that essay. He is, therefore, left completely in the dark; and it is melancholy to

who wrote his poem on the Punic War in the first century A. D.; and he should at least recall of M. Annæus Lucan's (A. D. 38–65 ?) *Pharsalia,* which described the civil war between Pompey and Cæsar, the often quoted verse: —

"Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni."

[1] See Mahaffy for Pindar and the dramatists. Callimachus was an Alexandrian poet of the third century B. C., of whose voluminous works only some epigrams and miscellaneous pieces are extant.

[2] See page 209.

see how helplessly he gropes his way from blunder to blunder. He assigns as grounds for his religious belief stories as absurd as that of the Cock Lane ghost,[1] and forgeries as rank as Ireland's Vortigern;[2] puts faith in the lie about the Thundering Legion;[3] is convinced that Tiberius moved the senate to admit Jesus among the gods;[4] and pronounces the letter of Abgarus, King of Edessa,[5] to be a record of great authority. Nor were these errors the effects of superstition, for to superstition Addison was by no means prone. The truth is, that he was writing about what he did not understand.

Miss Aikin has discovered a letter from which it appears that, while Addison resided at Oxford, he was one of several writers whom the booksellers en-

[1] See the essay on Johnson, page 40, note 2.

[2] William Henry Ireland (1777–1835) ranks with Lauder and Macpherson and Psalmanazar among literary forgers. He forged Shakespeare documents and pretended to have found a new version of *Lear* and an entirely new play, *Vortigern and Rowena.* Malone exposed the imposture, but enough people were gulled to enable Ireland to get his forgeries published and his *Vortigern* acted at Drury Lane, where it was a dismal failure. In 1805 he published a confession of his guilt, and for thirty years continued to do literary work in poverty and obscurity.

[3] This name was given to a legion of Christians serving in the army of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius against the Quadi. Their prayer for rain to quench their thirst was said to have been followed by a thunder shower which accomplished their desires, while killing numbers of the enemy by lightning.

[4] The story rests on the authority of Tertullian, the celebrated Christian Father of the end of the second century.

[5] Eusebius, the Church historian, relates how this king was ill and wrote a letter to Christ beseeching Him to come and heal him. Christ replied by letter saying that He would send one of His disciples. After the resurrection St. Thomas sent Thaddæus, who performed the service.

gaged to make an English version of Herodotus; and she infers that he must have been a good Greek scholar. We can allow very little weight to this argument when we consider that his fellow-laborers were to have been Boyle and Blackmore.[1] Boyle is remembered chiefly as the nominal author of the worst book on Greek history and philology that ever was printed; and this book, bad as it is, Boyle was unable to produce without help. Of Blackmore's attainments in the ancient tongues, it may be sufficient to say, that in his prose he has confounded an aphorism with an apothegm, and that when, in his verse, he treats of classical subjects, his habit is to regale his readers with four false quantities[2] to a page.

It is probable that the classical acquirements of Addison were of as much service to him as if they had been more extensive. The world generally gives its admiration, not to the man who does what nobody else even attempts to do, but to the man who does best what multitudes do well. Bentley was so immeasurably superior to all the other scholars of his time, that few among them could discover his superiority.

[1] Charles Boyle (1676–1731), nephew of the great philosopher, edited the so-called *Epistles of Phalaris* with the assistance of Atterbury (see Macaulay's essay on the latter), which led to the publication of Dr. Richard Bentley's (1662–1742), famous *Dissertation* which proved the spuriousness of the Epistles and established Bentley's fame as the greatest of English classical scholars. Sir Richard Blackmore (1650?–1729), was a better physician than poet, and has been for nearly two centuries the butt of critics. See Johnson's *Life* of him.

[2] Ancient poetry depended on the quantity of the syllables, so a mistake in this matter was a proof of Blackmore's lack of scholarship.

But the accomplishment in which Addison excelled his contemporaries was then, as it is now, highly valued and assiduously cultivated at all English seats of learning. Everybody who had been at a public school had written Latin verses: many had written such verses with tolerable success, and were quite able to appreciate, though by no means able to rival, the skill with which Addison imitated Virgil. His lines on the "Barometer" and the "Bowling Green"[1] were applauded by hundreds to whom the "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris" was as unintelligible as the hieroglyphics on an obelisk.

Purity of style, and an easy flow of numbers, are common to all Addison's Latin poems. Our favorite piece is "The Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies," for in that piece we discern a gleam of the fancy and humor which many years later enlivened thousands of breakfast tables. Swift boasted that he was never known to steal a hint, and he certainly owed as little to his predecessors as any modern writer. Yet we cannot help suspecting that he borrowed, perhaps unconsciously, one of the happiest touches in his "Voyage to Lilliput" from Addison's verses. Let our readers judge.

"The Emperor," says Gulliver, "is taller by about the breadth of my nail than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders."

About thirty years before "Gulliver's Travels" appeared, Addison wrote these lines: —

> "Jamque acies inter medias sese arduus infert
> Pygmeadum ductor, qui, majestate verendus,

[1] *Sphæristerium.* Addison's Latin verse is small in quantity.

Incessuque gravis, reliquos supereminet omnes
Mole gigantea, mediamque asurgit in ulnam." [1]

The Latin poems of Addison were greatly and justly admired, both at Oxford and Cambridge, before his name had ever been heard by the wits who thronged the coffee-houses round Drury Lane Theatre.[2] In his twenty-second year he ventured to appear before the public as a writer of English verse. He addressed some complimentary lines to Dryden,[3] who, after many triumphs and many reverses, had at length reached a secure and lonely eminence among the literary men of that age. Dryden appears to have been much gratified by the young scholar's praise, and an interchange of civilities and good offices followed. Addison was probably introduced by Dryden to Congreve, and was certainly presented by Congreve to Charles Montague,[4] who was then chancellor of the exchequer, and leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons.

At this time, Addison seemed inclined to devote himself to poetry. He published a translation of part of the fourth "Georgic," "Lines to King William," and other performances of equal value; that

[1] The verses occur about the middle of the *Prœlium inter Pygmœos et Grues Commissum*, and may be roughly rendered: "And now into the midst of the squadrons the bold leader of the Pygmies forces his way, who, venerable in majesty and commanding in his movements, towers over all the rest with his gigantic stature, and rises to the height of the elbow."

[2] See the essay on Johnson, page 26, note.

[3] John Dryden (1631–1700) had seven years to live, and his best work (the *Fables* and *Alexander's Feast*) to do when these lines were written (1693).

[4] See the essay on Milton, page 11, note 2. He was afterwards Earl of Halifax, and must not be confused with other statesmen of the same name, one of whom is mentioned in this essay.

is to say, of no value at all. But in those days the public was in the habit of receiving with applause pieces which would now have little chance of obtaining the Newdigate prize or the Seatonian prize.[1] And the reason is obvious. The heroic couplet[2] was then the favorite measure. The art of arranging words in that measure, so that the lines may flow smoothly, that the accents may fall correctly, that the rhymes may strike the ear strongly, and that there may be a pause at the end of every distich, is an art as mechanical as that of mending a kettle or shoeing a horse, and may be learned by any human being who has sense enough to learn anything. But, like other mechanical arts, it was gradually improved by means of many experiments and many failures. It was reserved for Pope to discover the trick, to make himself complete master of it, and to teach it to everybody else. From the time when his "Pastorals" appeared, heroic versification became matter of rule and compass; and before long all artists were on a level. Hundreds of dunces who never blundered on one happy thought or expression were able to write reams of couplets, which, as far as euphony was concerned, could not be distinguished from those of Pope himself, and which very clever writers of the reign of Charles II. — Rochester,[3] for example, or Marvell,[4]

[1] Prizes for English verse awarded at Oxford and Cambridge respectively.

[2] That is, the iambic pentameter, in couplets that in the hands of Pope and his school do not overlap.

[3] John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), author of the famous epitaph on Charles II., and a poet capable of much better work than the mass of his poetry, which is unrivaled for filth and obscenity.

[4] Andrew Marvell (1620–1678) was a politician, a poet of con-

or Oldham[1] — would have contemplated with admiring despair.

Ben Jonson was a great man, Hoole[2] a very small man. But Hoole, coming after Pope, had learned how to manufacture decasyllable verses, and poured them forth by thousands and tens of thousands, all as well turned, as smooth, and as like each other as the blocks which have passed through Mr. Brunel's[3] mill in the dockyard at Portsmouth. Ben's heroic couplets resemble blocks rudely hewn out by an unpracticed hand with a blunt hatchet. Take as a specimen his translation of a celebrated passage in the "Æneid:" —

> "This child our parent earth, stirr'd up with spite
> Of all the gods, brought forth, and, as some write,
> She was last sister of that giant race
> That sought to scale Jove's court, right swift of pace,
> And swifter far of wing, a monster vast
> And dreadful. Look, how many plumes are placed
> On her huge corpse, so many waking eyes
> Stick underneath, and, which may stranger rise
> In the report, as many tongues she wears."[4]

Compare with these jagged, misshapen distichs the neat fabric which Hoole's machine produces in unlim-

siderable powers (see the selections from him in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*), and a friend of Milton's.

[1] John Oldham (1655–1683) was a predecessor of Dryden in writing vigorous poetic satires.

[2] John Hoole (1727–1803), chiefly known as a translator of Tasso and Ariosto.

[3] Sir Mark Isambard Brunel (1769–1849), a French engineer who invented a plan for making block pulleys for ships, which was successfully tried at Portsmouth. He was also the engineer of the Thames Tunnel.

[4] The lines are to be found in Jonson's *The Poetaster*, v., i. in which Virgil is a character. They are a translation of *Æneid*, iv. 178–183.

ited abundance. We take the first lines on which we open in his version of Tasso. They are neither better nor worse than the rest: —

> "O thou, whoe'er thou art, whose steps are led,
> By choice or fate, these lonely shores to tread,
> No greater wonders east or west can boast
> Than yon small island on the pleasing coast.
> If e'er thy sight would blissful scenes explore,
> The current pass, and seek the further shore." [1]

Ever since the time of Pope there has been a glut of lines of this sort; and we are now as little disposed to admire a man for being able to write them as for being able to write his name. But in the days of William III. such versification was rare; and a rhymer who had any skill in it passed for a great poet, just as, in the dark ages, a person who could write his name passed for a great clerk. Accordingly, Duke, Stepney, Granville, Walsh,[2] and others whose only title to fame was that they said in tolerable metre what might have been as well said in prose, or what was not worth saying at all, were honored with marks of distinction which ought to be reserved for genius. With these Addison must have ranked, if he had not earned true and lasting glory by performances which very little resembled his juvenile poems.

[1] *Jerusalem Delivered*, xiv. 58.

[2] Richard Duke (died 1710–11), George Stepney (1663–1707), George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne (1667?–1735), and William Walsh (1663–1709) are all among the poets who figure in Johnson's *Lives;* but even there they take up little room. They are all forgotten save Walsh, who is remembered through his connection with Pope and through his amusing poem *The Despairing Lover* (given in Ward's *Poets*). Macaulay's criticism of Addison's juvenile poetry is eminently just.

Dryden was now busied with Virgil, and obtained from Addison a critical preface to the "Georgics." In return for this service, and for other services of the same kind, the veteran poet, in the postscript to the translation of the "Æneid," complimented his young friend with great liberality, and indeed with more liberality than sincerity. He affected to be afraid that his own performance would not sustain a comparison with the version of the fourth "Georgic," by "the most ingenious Mr. Addison of Oxford." "After his bees," added Dryden, "my latter swarm is scarcely worth the hiving."[1]

The time had now arrived when it was necessary for Addison to choose a calling. Everything seemed to point his course towards the clerical profession. His habits were regular, his opinions orthodox. His college had large ecclesiastical preferment in its gift, and boasts that it has given at least one bishop to almost every see in England. Dr. Lancelot Addison held an honorable place in the Church, and had set his heart on seeing his son a clergyman. It is clear, from some expressions in the young man's rhymes, that his intention was to take orders. But Charles Montague interfered. Montague had first brought himself into notice by verses well timed and not contemptibly written, but never, we think, rising above mediocrity. Fortunately for himself and for his country, he early quitted poetry, in which he could never have attained a rank as high as that of Dorset[2] or

[1] A reference to the subject matter of the fourth *Georgic*, which treats of bees, and had been translated by Addison.

[2] Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1637–1706), a famous patron of men of letters and a poet who has a place in Ward's collection through such graceful society verse as his *Song written at Sea*.

Rochester, and turned his mind to official and parliamentary business. It is written that the ingenious person who undertook to instruct Rasselas,[1] prince of Abyssinia, in the art of flying, ascended an eminence, waved his wings, sprang into the air, and instantly dropped into the lake. But it is added that the wings, which were unable to support him through the sky, bore him up effectually as soon as he was in the water. This is no bad type of the fate of Charles Montague, and of men like him. When he attempted to soar into the regions of poetical invention, he altogether failed; but, as soon as he had descended from that ethereal elevation into a lower and grosser element, his talents instantly raised him above the mass. He became a distinguished financier, debater, courtier, and party leader. He still retained his fondness for the pursuits of his early days; but he showed that fondness, not by wearying the public with his own feeble performances, but by discovering and encouraging literary excellence in others. A crowd of wits and poets, who would easily have vanquished him as a competitor, revered him as a judge and a patron. In his plans for the encouragement of learning, he was cordially supported by the ablest and most virtuous of his colleagues, the Lord Chancellor Somers.[2] Though both these great statesmen had a sincere love of letters, it was not solely from a love of letters that they were desirous to enlist youths of high intellectual qualifications in the public service. The Revolution had altered the whole system of government. Before that event, the press had been controlled by censors,

[1] See the essay on Johnson, page 35.

[2] See the essay on Milton, page 50, note 2. Besides Addison's youthful verses to him, the student ought to read the tribute which the matured man paid to him in *The Freeholder*, No. 39.

and the Parliament had sat only two months in eight years. Now the press was free, and had begun to exercise unprecedented influence on the public mind. Parliament met annually and sat long. The chief power in the State had passed to the House of Commons. At such a conjuncture it was natural that literary and oratorical talents should rise in value. There was danger that a government which neglected such talents might be subverted by them. It was, therefore, a profound and enlightened policy which led Montague and Somers to attach such talents to the Whig party by the strongest ties both of interest and of gratitude.

It is remarkable that in a neighboring country we have recently seen similar effects follow from similar causes. The Revolution of July, 1830, established representative government in France. The men of letters instantly rose to the highest importance in the State.[1] At the present moment, most of the persons whom we see at the head both of the Administration and of the Opposition have been professors, historians, journalists, poets. The influence of the literary class in England during the generation which followed the Revolution was great, but by no means so great as it has lately been in France; for in England the aristocracy of intellect had to contend with a powerful and deeply rooted aristocracy of a very different kind. France had no Somersets and Shrewsburies[2] to keep down her Addisons and Priors.

It was in the year 1699, when Addison had just

[1] For example, Thiers, Guizot, Chateaubriand.

[2] Representative Whig statesmen of the period, — Charles Seymour (1661–1748), Duke of Somerset, and Charles Talbot (1660–1718), Duke of Shrewsbury.

completed his twenty-seventh year, that the course of his life was finally determined. Both the great chiefs of the ministry were kindly disposed towards him. In political opinions he already was, what he continued to be through life, a firm though a moderate Whig. He had addressed the most polished and vigorous of his early English lines to Somers, and had dedicated to Montague a Latin poem, truly Virgilian both in style and rhythm, on the peace of Ryswick. The wish of the young poet's great friends was, it should seem, to employ him in the service of the Crown abroad. But an intimate knowledge of the French language was a qualification indispensable to a diplomatist, and this qualification Addison had not acquired. It was therefore thought desirable that he should pass some time on the Continent in preparing himself for official employment. His own means were not such as would enable him to travel, but a pension of three hundred pounds a year was procured for him by the interest of the lord chancellor. It seems to have been apprehended that some difficulty might be started by the rulers of Magdalen College, but the chancellor of the exchequer wrote in the strongest terms to Hough. The State — such was the purport of Montague's letter — could not at that time spare to the Church such a man as Addison. Too many high civil posts were already occupied by adventurers, who, destitute of every liberal art and sentiment, at once pillaged and disgraced the country which they pretended to serve. It had become necessary to recruit for the public service from a very different class, — from that class of which Addison was the representative. The close of the minister's letter was remarkable. "I am called," he said, "an enemy

of the Church; but I will never do it any other injury than keeping Mr. Addison out of it."

This interference was successful; and in the summer of 1699 Addison, made a rich man by his pension, and still retaining his fellowship, quitted his beloved Oxford, and set out on his travels. He crossed from Dover to Calais, proceeded to Paris, and was received there with great kindness and politeness by a kinsman of his friend Montague, Charles, Earl of Manchester,[1] who had just been appointed ambassador to the court of France. The countess, a Whig and a toast,[2] was probably as gracious as her lord; for Addison long retained an agreeable recollection of the impression which she at this time made on him, and, in some lively lines written on the glasses of the Kit Cat Club,[3] described the envy which her cheeks, glowing with the genuine bloom of England, had excited among the painted beauties of Versailles.

Louis XIV. was at this time expiating the vices of his youth by a devotion which had no root in reason and bore no fruit of charity. The servile literature of France had changed its character to suit the changed character of the prince. No book appeared

[1] Charles Montagu, first Duke of Manchester (1660–1722), married Dodington, second daughter of Lord Brooke.

[2] That is, her beauty and charms were drunk to by men of fashion at their banquets. For the origin of the term, see *The Tatler*, No. 24.

[3] The Kit Cat Club was formed about 1700 by a number of prominent Whigs. It got its name, according to one story, from that of the maker of its mutton pies — Christopher Cat. Another story combines the name of the tavern-keeper, Christopher, with the sign of the tavern, a cat. One custom of the club was to have each new member name a toast, whereupon a glass was engraved with verses in honor of the lady.

that had not an air of sanctity. Racine,[1] who was just dead, had passed the close of his life in writing sacred dramas; and Dacier[2] was seeking for the Athanasian mysteries in Plato. Addison described this state of things in a short but lively and graceful letter to Montague. Another letter, written about the same time to the lord chancellor, conveyed the strongest assurances of gratitude and attachment. "The only return I can make to your lordship," said Addison, "will be to apply myself entirely to my business." With this view he quitted Paris and repaired to Blois, a place where it was supposed that the French language was spoken in its highest purity, and where not a single Englishman could be found. Here he passed some months pleasantly and profitably. Of his way of life at Blois, one of his associates, an abbé named Philippeaux, gave an account to Joseph Spence.[3] If this account is to be trusted, Addison studied much, mused much, talked little, had fits of absence, and either had no love affairs or was too discreet to confide them to the abbé. A man who, even when surrounded by fellow-countrymen and fellow-students, had always been

[1] Jean Racine (1639–1699), the famous French tragic dramatist.

[2] André Dacier (1652?–1722) was a distinguished French classical scholar, whose wife (Anne Lefèvre, 1654–1720) was also noted as a translator. He was at this time trying to connect the chief mysteries of Christianity (represented in the Athanasian theology, so called after Athanasius, the great Bishop of Alexandria, about 296–373 A. D.) with the philosophy of Plato.

[3] (1699–1768). He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and was intimate with Pope and other celebrities, of whom he has much to say in his *Anecdotes*.

remarkably shy and silent, was not likely to be loquacious in a foreign tongue and among foreign companions. But it is clear from Addison's letters, some of which were long after published in "The Guardian,"[1] that, while he appeared to be absorbed in his own meditations, he was really observing French society with that keen and sly yet not ill-natured side-glance which was peculiarly his own.

From Blois he returned to Paris, and, having now mastered the French language, found great pleasure in the society of French philosophers and poets. He gave an account, in a letter to Bishop Hough, of two highly interesting conversations, one with Malebranche, the other with Boileau.[2] Malebranche expressed great partiality for the English, and extolled the genius of Newton, but shook his head when Hobbes was[3] mentioned, and was indeed so unjust as to call the author of "The Leviathan" a poor, silly creature. Addison's modesty restrained him from fully relating, in his letter, the circumstances of his introduction to Boileau. Boileau, having survived the friends and rivals of his youth, — old, deaf, and melancholy, — lived in retirement, seldom went either to court or to the Academy,[4] and was almost inacces-

[1] Nos. 101 and 104.

[2] For Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), the philosopher, and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), the poetic satirist and literary dictator, see some history of French literature like Lanson's.

[3] Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), the philosopher, whose *Leviathan* is an important treatise in theoretical politics.

[4] The famous French Academy was founded in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu. It grew out of a private club, but since its recognition by government has been the official representative of the cause of letters in France. It consists of forty members, and its chief collective work is its great Dictionary.

sible to strangers. Of the English and of English literature he knew nothing. He had hardly heard the name of Dryden. Some of our countrymen, in the warmth of their patriotism, have asserted that this ignorance must have been affected. We own that we see no ground for such a supposition. English literature was to the French of the age of Louis XIV. what German literature was to our own grandfathers. Very few, we suspect, of the accomplished men who, sixty or seventy years ago, used to dine in Leicester Square with Sir Joshua, or at Streatham with Mrs. Thrale,[1] had the slightest notion that Wieland was one of the first wits and poets, and Lessing,[2] beyond all dispute, the first critic in Europe. Boileau knew just as little about the "Paradise Lost," and about "Absalom and Achitophel;"[3] but he had read Addison's Latin poems, and admired them greatly. They had given him, he said, quite a new notion of the state of learning and taste among the English. Johnson will have it that these praises were insincere. "Nothing," says he, "is better known of Boileau than that he had an injudicious and peevish contempt of modern Latin; and therefore his profession of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation." Now, nothing is better known of Boileau than that he was singularly sparing of compliments. We do not remember that either

[1] See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and the essay on Johnson. Sir Joshua is, of course, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter.

[2] Cristoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), the author of *Oberon*, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), famous for his dramas *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Emilia Galotti*, and *Nathan der Weise*, and especially for his great critical treatise *Laocoön, or the Limits of Painting and Poetry*.

[3] See Dryden's Works. It is his greatest political satire.

friendship or fear ever induced him to bestow praise on any composition which he did not approve. On literary questions his caustic, disdainful, and self-confident spirit rebelled against that authority to which everything else in France bowed down. He had the spirit to tell Louis XIV., firmly and even rudely, that his Majesty knew nothing about poetry, and admired verses which were detestable. What was there in Addison's position that could induce the satirist, whose stern and fastidious temper had been the dread of two generations, to turn sycophant for the first and last time? Nor was Boileau's contempt of modern Latin either injudicious or peevish. He thought, indeed, that no poem of the first order would ever be written in a dead language. And did he think amiss? Has not the experience of centuries confirmed his opinion? Boileau also thought it probable that, in the best modern Latin, a writer of the Augustan age would have detected ludicrous improprieties. And who can think otherwise? What modern scholar can honestly declare that he sees the smallest impurity in the style of Livy? Yet is it not certain that, in the style of Livy, Pollio,[1] whose taste had been formed on the banks of the Tiber, detected the inelegant idiom of the Po? Has any modern scholar understood Latin better than Frederick the Great understood French? Yet is it not notorious that Frederick the Great — after reading, speaking, writing French, and nothing but French, during more than half a century; after unlearning his mother

[1] C. Asinius Pollio (76 B. C.–4 A. D.), the famous Roman general, author, and patron of learning. (See Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*.) Nearly all his writings are lost save some letters to Cicero.

tongue in order to learn French; after living familiarly during many years with French associates — could not, to the last, compose in French without imminent risk of committing some mistake which would have moved a smile in the literary circles of Paris? Do we believe that Erasmus[1] and Fracastorius[2] wrote Latin as well as Dr. Robertson[3] and Sir Walter Scott wrote English? And are there not in the "Dissertation on India," the last of Dr. Robertson's works, in "Waverley," in "Marmion," Scotticisms at which a London apprentice would laugh? But does it follow, because we think thus, that we can find nothing to admire in the noble alcaics[4] of Gray, or in the playful elegiacs[5] of Vincent Bourne?[6] Surely not. Nor was Boileau so ignorant or tasteless as to be incapable of appreciating good modern Latin. In the very letter to which Johnson alludes,[7] Boileau

[1] Desiderius Erasmus (1467?–1536), the great Dutch humanist, theological controversialist, and satirist. See Froude's lectures on him, and Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth.*

[2] Hieronymo Fracastorio (1483–1553), a learned Italian physician and poet.

[3] See the essay on Johnson, page 60, note.

[4] Lines in a lyric strophe invented by Alcæus, the Greek poet. Perhaps the best of Gray's alcaics is the fragment beginning "O lachrymarum fons."

[5] That is, poems written in a succession of distichs consisting of a dactylic hexameter followed by a dactylic pentameter. The measure gets its name from having been early used in poems of lament.

[6] (1695?–1747.) An usher in Westminster School, who wrote entirely in Latin verse of excellent quality. Cowper, his pupil, has translated many of his verses.

[7] In his *Life of Addison*, to which several references are made.

says: "Ne croyez pas pourtant que je veuille par là blâmer les vers Latins que vous m'avez envoyés d'un de vos illustres académiciens. Je les ai trouvés fort beaux, et dignes de Vida et de Sannazar, mais non pas d'Horace et de Virgile."[1] Several poems in modern Latin have been praised by Boileau quite as liberally as it was his habit to praise anything. He says, for example, of the Père Fraguier's[2] epigrams, that Catullus seems to have come to life again. But the best proof that Boileau did not feel the undiscerning contempt for modern Latin verses which has been imputed to him is, that he wrote and published Latin verses in several metres. Indeed, it happens, curiously enough, that the most severe censure ever pronounced by him on modern Latin is conveyed in Latin hexameters. We allude to the fragment which begins: —

> "Quid numeris iterum me balbutire Latinis,
> Longe Alpes citra natum de patre Sicambro,
> Musa, jubes?"[3]

For these reasons we feel assured that the praise which Boileau bestowed on the "Machinæ Gesticu-

[1] "Don't think, however, that I want by that to blame the Latin verses of one of your illustrious Academicians that you have sent me. I have found them very beautiful and worthy of Vida and of Sannazaro, but not of Horace and of Virgil." From letter to Brossette, October 6, 1701. Marco Girolamo Vida (1489?–1566) and Giacopo Sannazaro (1458–1530) were Italian poets noted for their Latin verses. Vida's best known work is his *Art of Poetry;* Sannazaro's is his *Arcadia* (not in Latin).

[2] Claude François Fraguier (1666–1728), a French Jesuit, who wrote good Latin verses.

[3] "Why, Muse, do you bid me, born of a Sicambrian father a long way this side of the Alps, to stammer again in Latin numbers?" The opening lines of a fragmentary *Satira.*

lantes" and the "Gerano-Pygmæomachia" [1] was sincere. He certainly opened himself to Addison with a freedom which was a sure indication of esteem. Literature was the chief subject of conversation. The old man talked on his favorite theme much and well, indeed, as his young hearer thought, incomparably well. Boileau had undoubtedly some of the qualities of a great critic. He wanted imagination, but he had strong sense. His literary code was formed on narrow principles, but in applying it he showed great judgment and penetration. In mere style, abstracted from the ideas of which style is the garb, his taste is excellent. He was well acquainted with the great Greek writers; and, though unable fully to appreciate their creative genius, admired the majestic simplicity of their manner, and had learned from them to despise bombast and tinsel. It is easy, we think, to discover in "The Spectator" and "The Guardian" traces of the influence, in part salutary and in part pernicious, which the mind of Boileau had on the mind of Addison.

While Addison was at Paris, an event took place which made that capital a disagreeable residence for an Englishman and a Whig. Charles,[2] second of the name, King of Spain, died, and bequeathed his dominions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, a younger son of the Dauphin. The King of France, in direct violation of his engagements both with Great Britain and with the States General,[3] accepted the bequest on

[1] Titles of Addison's Latin poems, *A Puppet-Show* and *The Battle of the Cranes and Pygmies.*

[2] 1661–1700. He was a wretchedly incompetent monarch.

[3] Holland, or rather the representative assembly of the provinces of the Netherlands.

behalf of his grandson. The house of Bourbon was at the summit of human grandeur. England had been outwitted, and found herself in a situation at once degrading and perilous. The people of France, not presaging the calamities by which they were destined to expiate the perfidy of their sovereign, went mad with pride and delight. Every man looked as if a great estate had just been left him. "The French conversation," said Addison, "begins to grow insupportable; that which was before the vainest nation in the world is now worse than ever." Sick of the arrogant exultation of the Parisians, and probably foreseeing that the peace between France and England could not be of long duration, he set off for Italy.

In December, 1700,[1] he embarked at Marseilles. As he glided along the Ligurian[2] coast, he was delighted by the sight of myrtles and olive-trees, which retained their verdure under the winter solstice. Soon, however, he encountered one of the black storms of the Mediterranean. The captain of the ship gave up all for lost, and confessed himself to a Capuchin who happened to be on board. The English heretic, in the mean time, fortified himself against the terrors of death with devotions of a very different kind. How strong an impression this perilous voyage made on him appears from the ode, "How are

[1] Macaulay's footnote: It is strange that Addison should, in the first line of his travels, have misdated his departure from Marseilles by a whole year, and still more strange that this slip of the pen, which throws the whole narrative into inextricable confusion, should have been repeated in a succession of editions, and never detected by Tickell or by Hurd.

[2] The northwestern coast of Italy, so called from the primitive inhabitants, the *Ligures*.

thy servants blest, O Lord!" which was long after published in "The Spectator." After some days of discomfort and danger, Addison was glad to land at Savona,[1] and to make his way, over mountains where no road had yet been hewn out by art, to the city of Genoa.

At Genoa, still ruled by her own doge and by the nobles whose names were inscribed on her Book of Gold,[2] Addison made a short stay. He admired the narrow streets overhung by long lines of towering palaces, the walls rich with frescoes, the gorgeous temple of the Annunciation, and the tapestries whereon were recorded the long glories of the house of Doria.[3] Thence he hastened to Milan, where he contemplated the Gothic magnificence of the cathedral with more wonder than pleasure. He passed Lake Benacus[4] while a gale was blowing, and saw the waves raging as they raged when Virgil looked upon them. At Venice, then the gayest city in Europe, the traveler spent the Carnival, the gayest season of the year, in the midst of masques, dances, and serenades. Here he was at once diverted and provoked by the absurd dramatic pieces which then disgraced the Italian stage. To one of those pieces, however, he was indebted for a valuable hint. He was present when a ridiculous play on the death of Cato was performed. Cato, it seems, was in love with the daughter of Scipio. The lady had given her heart to Cæsar. The rejected lover determined to destroy himself.

[1] On the coast about twenty-five miles west from Genoa.

[2] This register of nobility is usually connected with Venice.

[3] Doria, the celebrated family of Genoa, of whom the chief representative was Andrea, the great admiral (1466–1560).

[4] Now Lago di Garda, the largest of the Italian lakes.

He appeared seated in his library, a dagger in his hand, a Plutarch and a Tasso before him; and in this position he pronounced a soliloquy before he struck the blow. We are surprised that so remarkable a circumstance as this should have escaped the notice of all Addison's biographers. There cannot, we conceive, be the smallest doubt that this scene, in spite of its absurdities and anachronisms, struck the traveler's imagination, and suggested to him the thought of bringing "Cato" on the English stage. It is well known that about this time he began his tragedy, and that he finished the first four acts before he returned to England.

On his way from Venice to Rome, he was drawn some miles out of the beaten road by a wish to see the smallest independent state in Europe. On a rock where the snow still lay, though the Italian spring was now far advanced, was perched the little fortress of San Marino.[1] The roads which led to the secluded town were so bad that few travelers had ever visited it, and none had ever published an account of it. Addison could not suppress a good-natured smile at the simple manners and institutions of this singular community; but he observed, with the exultation of a Whig, that the rude mountain tract which formed the territory of the republic swarmed with an honest, healthy, and contented peasantry, while the rich plain which surrounded the metropolis of civil and spiritual tyranny was scarcely less desolate than the uncleared wilds of America.

At Rome, Addison remained on his first visit only long enough to catch a glimpse of St. Peter's and of

[1] Still a tiny republic covering only thirty-three miles square.

the Pantheon. His haste is the more extraordinary because the Holy Week was close at hand. He has given no hint which can enable us to pronounce why he chose to fly from a spectacle which every year allures from distant regions persons of far less taste and sensibility than his. Possibly, traveling, as he did, at the charge of a government distinguished by its enmity to the Church of Rome, he may have thought that it would be imprudent in him to assist at the most magnificent rite of that church. Many eyes would be upon him, and he might find it difficult to behave in such a manner as to give offense neither to his patrons in England nor to those among whom he resided. Whatever his motives may have been, he turned his back on the most august and affecting ceremony which is known among men, and posted along the Appian Way[1] to Naples.

Naples was then destitute of what are now, perhaps, its chief attractions. The lovely bay and the awful mountain were indeed there; but a farmhouse stood on the theatre of Herculaneum, and rows of vines grew over the streets of Pompeii.[2] The temples of Pæstum[3] had not, indeed, been hidden from the eye of man by any great convulsion of nature; but, strange to say, their existence was a secret even to artists and antiquaries. Though situated within a

[1] The oldest and best known of the Roman roads, named after its constructor, Appius Claudius, the great orator and statesman (died after 280 B. C.).

[2] See Bulwer's famous novel, *The Last Days of Pompeii.* Herculaneum was discovered by accident in 1713, Pompeii in 1750. The work of excavation is still going on.

[3] Pæstum, originally the Greek Posidonia; it was sacked in the first and eleventh centuries, A. D., and deserted in the sixteenth.

few hours' journey of a great capital, where Salvator[1] had not long before painted, and where Vico[2] was then lecturing, those noble remains were as little known to Europe as the ruined cities overgrown by the forests of Yucatan. What was to be seen at Naples, Addison saw. He climbed Vesuvius, explored the tunnel of Posilipo,[3] and wandered among the vines and almond-trees of Capreæ.[4] But neither the wonders of nature nor those of art could so occupy his attention as to prevent him from noticing, though cursorily, the abuses of the government and the misery of the people. The great kingdom which had just descended to Philip V.[5] was in a state of paralytic dotage. Even Castile and Aragon were sunk in wretchedness. Yet, compared with the Italian dependencies of the Spanish Crown, Castile and Aragon might be called prosperous. It is clear that all the observations which Addison made in Italy tended to confirm him in the political opinions which he had adopted at home. To the last he always spoke of foreign travel as the best cure for Jacobitism. In his "Freeholder"[6] the Tory fox-hunter asks what travel-

[1] Salvator Rosa (1615–1673), a famous Italian landscape and portrait painter.

[2] Giovanni Battista Vico (1668–1744?), a noted Neapolitan jurist and pioneer in philosophic history.

[3] Posilipo (Lat. Pausilypum) is a promontory between Naples and Puteoli. The grotto, which is well described by Addison, was supposed to have been made by Virgil in his capacity of magician.

[4] Capreæ (Capri), an island, noted for its beautiful scenery, on the north side of the Bay of Naples.

[5] Louis XIV.'s grandson (1683–1746), over whom the War of the Spanish Succession was fought, and who was finally left on the throne of Spain. Naples at this time belonged to Spain.

[6] *The Freeholder* was a weekly political sheet published by

ing is good for, except to teach a man to jabber French and to talk against passive obedience.

From Naples, Addison returned to Rome by sea, along the coast which his favorite Virgil had celebrated. The felucca passed the headland where the oar and trumpet were placed by the Trojan adventurers on the tomb of Misenus,[1] and anchored at night under the shelter of the fabled promontory of Circe.[2] The voyage ended in the Tiber, still overhung with dark verdure, and still turbid with yellow sand, as when it met the eyes of Æneas.[3] From the ruined port of Ostia the stranger hurried to Rome, and at Rome he remained during those hot and sickly months when, even in the Augustan age, all who could make their escape fled from mad dogs and from streets black with funerals, to gather the first figs of the season in the country. It is probable that when he, long after, poured forth in verse his gratitude to the Providence which had enabled him to breathe unhurt in tainted air, he was thinking of the August and September which he passed at Rome.

It was not till the latter end of October that he tore himself away from the masterpieces of ancient and modern art which are collected in the city so

Addison from Friday, December 23, 1715, to Friday, June 29, 1716 (fifty-five numbers), in support of the House of Hanover, then just established, and recently threatened by the uprising under the Old Pretender. The essays as a whole are not particularly interesting. That referred to by Macaulay is No. 22, and is considered one of Addison's best.

[1] See *Æneid*, vi. 162 *seq.* Misenus was a trumpeter said to have been burned on the promontory that bears his name.

[2] Monte Circeio, a promontory thought to have been once the island of the enchantress Circe.

[3] *Æneid*, vii. 1–24.

long the mistress of the world. He then journeyed northward, passed through Sienna, and for a moment forgot his prejudices in favor of classic architecture as he looked on the magnificent cathedral. At Florence he spent some days with the Duke of Shrewsbury,[1] who — cloyed with the pleasures of ambition and impatient of its pains, fearing both parties and loving neither — had determined to hide in an Italian retreat talents and accomplishments which, if they had been united with fixed principles and civil courage, might have made him the foremost man of his age. These days, we are told, passed pleasantly, and we can easily believe it; for Addison was a delightful companion when he was at his ease; and the duke, though he seldom forgot that he was a Talbot, had the invaluable art of putting at ease all who came near him.

Addison gave some time to Florence, and especially to the sculptures in the Museum, which he preferred even to those of the Vatican. He then pursued his journey through a country in which the ravages of the last war were still discernible, and in which all men were looking forward with dread to a still fiercer conflict. Eugene[2] had already descended from the Rhætian Alps to dispute with Catinat[3] the rich plain of Lombardy. The faithless ruler of Savoy[4] was still reckoned among the allies of

[1] See p. 112, note 2. Also Macaulay's *History*, chap. xxii.

[2] Prince Eugene (1663–1736), next in prowess to Marlborough among the allies in the War of the Spanish Succession.

[3] Nicolas Catinat (1637–1712), Marshal of France, a fine soldier and a noble character.

[4] Victor Amadeus II. (1666–1732), Duke of Savoy, first King of Sardinia (1720). Resigned to his son in 1730. See Browning's play, *King Victor and King Charles*.

Louis. England had not yet actually declared war against France, but Manchester[1] had left Paris, and the negotiations which produced the Grand Alliance[2] against the house of Bourbon were in progress. Under such circumstances, it was desirable for an English traveler to reach neutral ground without delay. Addison resolved to cross Mont Cenis. It was December, and the road was very different from that which now reminds the stranger of the power and genius of Napoleon. The winter, however, was mild; and the passage was, for those times, easy. To this journey Addison alluded when, in the ode which we have already quoted, he said that for him the Divine Goodness had warmed the hoary Alpine hills.[3]

It was in the midst of the eternal snow that he composed his "Epistle" to his friend Montague, now Lord Halifax. That "Epistle," once widely renowned, is now known only to curious readers, and will hardly be considered by those to whom it is known as in any perceptible degree heightening Addison's fame. It is, however, decidedly superior to any English composition which he had previously published. Nay, we think it quite as good as any poem in heroic metre which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the publication of the "Essay on Criticism."[4] It contains passages as good as the second-rate passages of Pope, and would have added to the reputation of Parnell or Prior.[5]

[1] See page 114, note 1.

[2] That is, of Germany, Holland, and England against France, by treaty of September 7, 1701.

[3] "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" See page 122.

[4] Pope published this in 1711, two years after writing it.

[5] Macaulay's praise is not high, because the years 1700–1710

But, whatever be the literary merits or defects of the "Epistle," it undoubtedly does honor to the principles and spirit of the author. Halifax had now nothing to give. He had fallen from power, had been held up to obloquy, had been impeached by the House of Commons, and, though his peers had dismissed the impeachment, had, as it seemed, little chance of ever again filling high office. The "Epistle," written at such a time, is one among many proofs that there was no mixture of cowardice or meanness in the suavity and moderation which distinguished Addison from all the other public men of those stormy times.

At Geneva the traveler learned that a partial change of ministry had taken place in England, and that the Earl of Manchester had become secretary of state. Manchester exerted himself to serve his young friend. It was thought advisable that an English agent should be near the person of Eugene in Italy; and Addison, whose diplomatic education was now finished, was the man selected. He was preparing to enter on his honorable functions when all his prospects were for a time darkened by the death of William III.[1]

Anne had long felt a strong aversion — personal, political, and religious — to the Whig party. That aversion appeared in the first measures of her reign. Manchester was deprived of the seals after he had held them only a few weeks. Neither Somers nor Halifax

were barren of good poetry. Gay had not yet published, and Ambrose Philips's pastorals were of little moment. Addison's lines might have added to Prior's contemporary reputation, but then Prior is not now celebrated for his heroic verse, but for his *vers de société*, some of which were published in 1707.

[1] March 8, 1701.

was sworn of the Privy Council. Addison shared the fate of his three patrons. His hopes of employment in the public service were at an end; his pension was stopped; and it was necessary for him to support himself by his own exertions. He became tutor to a young English traveler, and appears to have rambled with his pupil over great part of Switzerland and Germany. At this time he wrote his pleasing treatise on medals. It was not published till after his death, but several distinguished scholars saw the manuscript, and gave just praise to the grace of the style and to the learning and ingenuity evinced by the quotations.

From Germany, Addison repaired to Holland, where he learned the melancholy news of his father's death. After passing some months in the United Provinces, he returned, about the close of the year 1703, to England. He was there cordially received by his friends, and introduced by them into the Kit Cat Club, a society in which were collected all the various talents and accomplishments which then gave lustre to the Whig party.

Addison was, during some months after his return from the Continent, hard pressed by pecuniary difficulties; but it was soon in the power of his noble patrons to serve him effectually. A political change — silent and gradual, but of the highest importance — was in daily progress. The accession of Anne had been hailed by the Tories with transports of joy and hope, and for a time it seemed that the Whigs had fallen never to rise again. The throne was surrounded by men supposed to be attached to the prerogative and to the Church; and among these none stood so high in the favor of the sovereign as the

Lord Treasurer Godolphin[1] and the Captain-General Marlborough.

The country gentlemen and country clergymen had fully expected that the policy of these ministers would be directly opposed to that which had been almost constantly followed by William; that the landed interest would be favored at the expense of trade; that no addition would be made to the funded debt; that the privileges conceded to Dissenters by the late king would be curtailed, if not withdrawn; that the war with France, if there must be such a war, would, on our part, be almost entirely naval; and that the government would avoid close connections with foreign powers, and, above all, with Holland.

But the country gentlemen and country clergymen were fated to be deceived, not for the last time. The prejudices and passions which raged without control in vicarages, in cathedral closes, and in the manor houses of fox-hunting squires, were not shared by the chiefs of the ministry. Those statesmen saw that it was both for the public interest and for their own interest to adopt a Whig policy, at least as respected the alliances of the country and the conduct of the war. But, if the foreign policy of the Whigs were adopted, it was impossible to abstain from adopting, also, their financial policy. The natural consequences followed. The rigid Tories were alienated from the government. The votes of the Whigs became necessary to it. The votes of the Whigs could be secured only by further concessions, and further concessions the Queen was induced to make.

[1] Sidney, Earl of Godolphin (1635–1712), Queen Anne's Lord Treasurer, noted for his sagacity and administrative capacity.

At the beginning of the year 1704, the state of parties bore a close analogy to the state of parties in 1826. In 1826, as in 1704, there was a Tory ministry divided into two hostile sections. The position of Mr. Canning [1] and his friends in 1826 corresponded to that which Marlborough and Godolphin occupied in 1704. Nottingham and Jersey [2] were, in 1704, what Lord Eldon and Lord Westmoreland [3] were in 1826. The Whigs of 1704 were in a situation resembling that in which the Whigs of 1826 stood. In 1704 Somers, Halifax, Sunderland,[4] Cowper,[5] were not in office. There was no avowed coalition between them and the moderate Tories. It is probable that no direct communication tending to such a coalition had yet taken place; yet all men saw that such a coalition was inevitable, nay, that it was already half formed. Such, or nearly such, was the state of things when tidings arrived of the great battle fought at Blenheim on the 13th of August, 1704. By the Whigs the news was

[1] George Canning (1770–1827), a statesman and orator prominent during and after the wars with Napoleon. He favored Catholic emancipation, freer trade, etc., and was opposed by the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel.

[2] Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham (1647–1730), Secretary of State under William III. and Anne; and Edward Villiers, Earl of Jersey (1656–1711), Secretary of State, and prominent diplomat.

[3] John Scott, Earl of Eldon (1751–1838), the great Lord Chancellor; John Fane, Earl of Westmoreland (1759–1841), who held the office of Lord Privy Seal for many years.

[4] Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland (1674–1722), Marlborough's son-in-law and a prominent politician.

[5] William, Earl Cowper (1664–1723), Lord Chancellor in 1707.

hailed with transports of joy and pride. No fault, no cause of quarrel, could be remembered by them against the commander whose genius had in one day changed the face of Europe, saved the imperial throne,[1] humbled the house of Bourbon, and secured the Act of Settlement[2] against foreign hostility. The feeling of the Tories was very different. They could not, indeed, without imprudence, openly express regret at an event so glorious to their country; but their congratulations were so cold and sullen as to give deep disgust to the victorious general and his friends.

Godolphin was not a reading man. Whatever time he could spare from business he was in the habit of spending at Newmarket[3] or at the card table. But he was not absolutely indifferent to poetry, and he was too intelligent an observer not to perceive that literature was a formidable engine of political warfare, and that the great Whig leaders had strengthened their party, and raised their character, by extending a liberal and judicious patronage to good writers. He was mortified, and not without reason, by the exceeding badness of the poems which appeared in honor of the battle of Blenheim. One of these poems has been rescued from oblivion by the exquisite absurdity of three lines: —

[1] That is, of the Holy Roman Empire, occupied by the House of Hapsburg, represented by Joseph I.

[2] The great Act of 1701, fixing the succession of the Throne, in default of heirs to William and Anne, in Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and her heirs. Sophia was the granddaughter of James I.

[3] A racing centre noted from the time of James I. See Macaulay's *History* (index).

> "Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
> And each man mounted on his capering beast;
> Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals." [1]

Where to procure better verses the treasurer did not know. He understood how to negotiate a loan or remit a subsidy; he was also well versed in the history of running-horses and fighting-cocks; but his acquaintance among the poets was very small. He consulted Halifax, but Halifax affected to decline the office of adviser. He had, he said, done his best, when he had power, to encourage men whose abilities and acquirements might do honor to their country. Those times were over. Other maxims had prevailed. Merit was suffered to pine in obscurity, and the public money was squandered on the undeserving. "I do know," he added, "a gentleman who would celebrate the battle in a manner worthy of the subject, but I will not name him." Godolphin, who was expert at the soft answer which turneth away wrath, and who was under the necessity of paying court to the Whigs, gently replied that there was too much ground for Halifax's complaints, but that what was amiss should in time be rectified, and that in the mean time the services of a man such as Halifax had described should be liberally rewarded. Halifax then mentioned Addison, but, mindful of the dignity, as well as of the pecuniary interest, of his friend, insisted that the minister should apply in the most courteous manner to Addison himself, and this Godolphin promised to do.

Addison then occupied a garret up three pair of

[1] This quotation has escaped the search of the editor, and of several scholars, and, what is more curious, escaped the commentators on *Martinus Scriblerus*.

stairs, over a small shop in the Haymarket. In this humble lodging he was surprised, on the morning which followed the conversation between Godolphin and Halifax, by a visit from no less a person than the Right Hon. Henry Boyle, then chancellor of the exchequer, and afterwards Lord Carleton.[1] This high-born minister had been sent by the lord treasurer as ambassador to the needy poet. Addison readily undertook the proposed task, — a task which, to so good a Whig, was probably a pleasure. When the poem was little more than half finished, he showed it to Godolphin, who was delighted with it, and particularly with the famous similitude of the angel.[2] Addison was instantly appointed to a commissionership[3] worth about two hundred pounds a year, and was assured that this appointment was only an earnest of greater favors.

"The Campaign" came forth, and was as much admired by the public as by the minister. It pleases us less, on the whole, than the "Epistle" to Halifax; yet it undoubtedly ranks high among the poems which appeared during the interval between the death of Dryden and the dawn of Pope's genius. The chief merit of "The Campaign," we think, is that which was noticed by Johnson, — the manly and rational

[1] Also Secretary of State under Anne. The third volume of *The Spectator* was dedicated to him. He died in 1725.

[2] "So when an angel by divine command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast,
And, pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

[3] Of appeals. He succeeded the great philosopher John Locke.

rejection of fiction. The first great poet whose works have come down to us sang of war long before war became a science or a trade. If, in his time, there was enmity between two little Greek towns, each poured forth its crowd of citizens, ignorant of discipline, and armed with implements of labor rudely turned into weapons. On each side appeared conspicuous a few chiefs, whose wealth had enabled them to procure good armor, horses, and chariots, and whose leisure had enabled them to practice military exercises. One such chief — if he were a man of great strength, agility, and courage — would probably be more formidable than twenty common men; and the force and dexterity with which he flung his spear might have no inconsiderable share in deciding the event of the day. Such were probably the battles with which Homer was familiar. But Homer related the actions of men of a former generation; of men who sprang from the gods, and communed with the gods face to face; of men, one of whom could with ease hurl rocks which two sturdy hinds of a later period would be unable even to lift. He therefore naturally represented their martial exploits as resembling in kind, but far surpassing in magnitude, those of the stoutest and most expert combatants of his own age. Achilles clad in celestial armor, drawn by celestial coursers, grasping the spear which none but himself could raise, driving all Troy and Lycia before him, and choking Scamander with dead, was only a magnificent exaggeration of the real hero, who, strong, fearless, accustomed to the use of weapons, guarded by a shield and helmet of the best Sidonian fabric, and whirled along by horses of Thessalian breed, struck down with his own right arm foe after foe.

In all rude societies similar notions are found. There are at this day countries where the Lifeguardsman Shaw[1] would be considered as a much greater warrior than the Duke of Wellington. Bonaparte loved to describe the astonishment with which the Mamelukes[2] looked at his diminutive figure. Mourad Bey,[3] distinguished above all his fellows by his bodily strength, and by the skill with which he managed his horse and his sabre, could not believe that a man who was scarcely five feet high, and rode like a butcher, could be the greatest soldier in Europe.

Homer's descriptions of war had, therefore, as much truth as poetry requires. But truth was altogether wanting to the performances of those who, writing about battles which had scarcely anything in common with the battles of his times, servilely imitated his manner. The folly of Silius Italicus,[4] in particular, is positively nauseous. He undertook to record in verse the vicissitudes of a great struggle between generals of the first order; and his narrative is made up of the hideous wounds which these generals inflicted with their own hands. Asdrubal flings

[1] "Jack" Shaw (1789–1815). A famous pugilist who afterwards won further distinction by his bravery at the battle of Waterloo. He killed ten French cuirassiers before falling himself.

[2] The Mamelukes were a powerful body of soldiers, originally slaves, who ruled Egypt through a sultan of their choosing from 1254 to 1517, when their kingdom was overthrown by Selim I. Mameluke beys were left in command, however, and from 1750 to 1811 the power of Turkey was merely nominal. In the latter year they were massacred by Mohammed Ali.

[3] A Mameluke chieftain who resisted Napoleon. Died in 1801.

[4] See page 101, note 2.

a spear which grazes the shoulder of the consul Nero, but Nero sends his spear into Asdrubal's side. Fabius slays Thuris and Butes, and Maris and Arses, and the long-haired Adherbes, and the gigantic Thylis, and Sapharus and Monæsus, and the trumpeter Morinus. Hannibal runs Perusinus through the groin with a stake, and breaks the backbone of Telesinus with a huge stone.[1] This detestable fashion was copied in modern times, and continued to prevail down to the age of Addison. Several versifiers had described William turning thousands to flight by his single prowess, and dyeing the Boyne with Irish blood. Nay, so estimable a writer as John Philips,[2] the author of "The Splendid Shilling," represented Marlborough as having won the battle of Blenheim merely by strength of muscle and skill in fence. The following lines may serve as an example: —

> "Churchill, viewing where
> The violence of Tallard [3] most prevailed,
> Came to oppose his slaughtering arm. With speed
> Precipitate he rode, urging his way
> O'er hills of gasping heroes, and fallen steeds
> Rolling in death. Destruction, grim with blood,
> Attends his furious course. Around his head
> The glowing balls play innocent, while he
> With dire impetuous sway deals fatal blows
> Among the flying Gauls. In Gallic blood
> He dyes his reeking sword, and strews the ground
> With headless ranks. What can they do? Or how
> Withstand his wide destroying sword?"

[1] All these incidents are taken from Silius's poem on the Punic War.

[2] (1676–1708.) His poem named was a humorous imitation of Miltonic blank-verse. The verses on Blenheim can be found in Chalmers's collection.

[3] Camille de Tallard (1652–1728), the French marshal who commanded at Blenheim.

Addison, with excellent sense and taste, departed from this ridiculous fashion. He reserved his praise for the qualities which made Marlborough truly great, — energy, sagacity, military science; but, above all, the poet extolled the firmness of that mind which, in the midst of confusion, uproar, and slaughter, examined and disposed everything with the serene wisdom of a higher intelligence.

Here it was that he introduced the famous comparison of Marlborough to an angel guiding the whirlwind. We will not dispute the general justice of Johnson's remarks on this passage. But we must point out one circumstance which appears to have escaped all the critics. The extraordinary effect which this simile produced when it first appeared, and which to the following generation seemed inexplicable, is doubtless to be chiefly attributed to a line which most readers now regard as a feeble parenthesis: —

"Such as, of late, o'er pale Britannia pass'd."

Addison spoke, not of a storm, but of the storm. The great tempest of November, 1703,[1] — the only tempest which in our latitude has equaled the rage of a tropical hurricane, — had left a dreadful recollection in the minds of all men. No other tempest was ever, in this country, the occasion of a parliamentary address or of a public fast. Whole fleets had been cast away. Large mansions had been blown down. One prelate had been buried beneath the ruins of his palace.[2] London and Bristol had presented the appearance of cities just sacked. Hundreds of families were still in mourning. The prostrate trunks of large

[1] Nov. 26–Dec. 1.

[2] The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Richard Kidder (born 1633).

trees, and the ruins of houses, still attested, in all the southern counties, the fury of the blast. The popularity which the simile of the angel enjoyed among Addison's contemporaries has always seemed to us to be a remarkable instance of the advantage which, in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general.[1]

Soon after "The Campaign," was published Addison's narrative of his travels in Italy. The first effect produced by this narrative was disappointment. The crowd of readers, who expected politics and scandal, speculations on the projects of Victor Amadeus,[2] and anecdotes about the jollities of convents and the amours of cardinals and nuns, were confounded by finding that the writer's mind was much more occupied by the war between the Trojans and Rutulians[3] than by the war between France and Austria; and that he seemed to have heard no scandal of later date than the gallantries of the Empress Faustina.[4] In time, however, the judgment of the many was overruled by that of the few; and before the book was reprinted it was so eagerly sought that it sold for five times the original price. It is still read with pleasure. The style is pure and flowing; the classical quotations and allusions are numerous and happy; and we are now and then charmed by that singularly humane and

[1] See in the essay on Milton the comparison of Milton and Dante.

[2] See page 128, note 4.

[3] An aboriginal people who under Turnus disputed Italy with the Trojans under Æneas. See the *Æneid*.

[4] Faustina may refer either to the wife of the Emperor Antoninus Pius or to her daughter, the wife of Marcus Aurelius; both were accused of shameless profligacy, with how much truth it is hard to determine.

delicate humor in which Addison excelled all men. Yet this agreeable work, even when considered merely as the history of a literary tour, may justly be censured on account of its faults of omission. We have already said that, though rich in extracts from the Latin poets, it contains scarcely any references to the Latin orators and historians. We must add that it contains little, or rather no information respecting the history and literature of modern Italy. To the best of our remembrance, Addison does not mention Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Boiardo, Berni, Lorenzo de' Medici, or Machiavelli.[1] He coldly tells us that at Ferrara he saw the tomb of Ariosto, and that at Venice he heard the gondoliers sing verses of Tasso. But for Tasso and Ariosto he cared far less than for Valerius Flaccus and Sidonius Apollinaris.[2] The gentle flow of the Ticin[3] brings a line of Silius[4] to

[1] Macaulay here gives a list of the chief writers of Italy between the time of the author of the *Divine Comedy* (1265–1321) and the age of the Medici at Florence. Petrarch (1304–1374) and Boccaccio (1313–1375) are well known. Count Boiardo (1434–1492) wrote the *Orlando Innamorato*, and Francesco Berni (born about 1490) remodeled this poem and wrote sonnets and Latin verses in a style greatly admired. Lorenzo the Magnificent (1448–1492) was the most illustrious of his family, and was a poet as well as a statesman; Nicolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) was a great historian and publicist whose name is associated, perhaps unjustly, with unprincipled statesmanship. For all these see at least Hallman and Sismondi, and read Macaulay's essays on Milton and Machiavelli, Dante, and Petrarch.

[2] Obscure Roman poets; the first wrote an unfinished poem on the Argonauts about the time of Vespasian (first century, A. D.), the second was a Christian writer of the fifth century who left some letters and panegyrical poems.

[3] The Ticino (Ticinus), a river of Northern Italy famous for one of Hannibal's battles.

[4] See page 101, note 2.

his mind. The sulphurous steam of Albula suggests to him several passages of Martial.[1] But he has not a word to say of the illustrious dead of Santa Croce;[2] he crosses the wood of Ravenna without recollecting the Spectre Huntsman,[3] and wanders up and down Rimini without one thought of Francesca.[4] At Paris he had eagerly sought an introduction to Boileau; but he seems not to have been at all aware that at Florence he was in the vicinity of a poet with whom Boileau could not sustain a comparison, — of the greatest lyric poet of modern times, Vincenzio Filicaja.[5] This is the more remarkable because Filicaja was the favorite poet of the accomplished Somers, under whose protection Addison traveled, and to whom the account of the travels is dedicated. The truth is, that Addison knew little, and cared less, about the literature of modern Italy. His favorite models were Latin. His favorite critics were French. Half the Tuscan poetry that he had read seemed to him monstrous, and the other half tawdry.

His travels were followed by the lively opera of "Rosamond." This piece was ill set to music, and therefore failed on the stage; but it completely succeeded in print, and is indeed excellent in its kind. The smoothness with which the verses glide, and the elasticity with which they bound, is, to our ears at

[1] Marcus Valerius Martialis (died about A. D. 104, at the age of seventy-five), the famous epigrammatist.

[2] The Westminster Abbey of Florence.

[3] See Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Day 5, Nov. 8. The huntsman was a knight who had killed himself for love of a cruel lady, whom afterwards he pursued with hounds.

[4] See Dante's *Inferno* (end of canto v.) for the episode of Francesca da Rimini, one of the most pathetic in all literature.

[5] See the essay on Milton, page 43, text and note 3.

least, very pleasing. We are inclined to think that if Addison had left heroic couplets to Pope and blank verse to Rowe,[1] and had employed himself in writing airy and spirited songs, his reputation as a poet would have stood far higher than it now does. Some years after his death, "Rosamond" was set to new music by Dr. Arne,[2] and was performed with complete success. Several passages long retained their popularity, and were daily sung, during the latter part of the reign of George II., at all the harpsichords in England.[3]

While Addison thus amused himself, his prospects and the prospects of his party were constantly becoming brighter and brighter. In the spring of 1705, the ministers were freed from the restraint imposed by a House of Commons in which Tories of the most perverse class had the ascendency. The elections were favorable to the Whigs. The coalition which had been tacitly and gradually formed was now openly avowed. The Great Seal[4] was given to Cowper. Somers and Halifax were sworn of the Council. Halifax was sent in the following year to carry the deco-

[1] Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), a dramatist now little read, and an early editor of Shakespeare.

[2] Dr. Thomas Augustine Arne (1710–1778). He wrote the music to *Rosamond* when he was only eighteen. He also furnished music for *Comus*.

[3] Mr. Gosse calls *Rosamond* a "graceful" opera, but proceeds to remark that "Addison was totally without lyric gift." The latter judgment, however difficult to square with the former, is undoubtedly correct, and should be received in place of Macaulay's praise, which was due rather to his love for Addison than to his better critical faculty.

[4] The great seal is attached to important documents of state and is kept by the Lord Chancellor, or by the Lord Keeper during a vacancy in the chancellorship.

rations of the order of the garter to the Electoral Prince of Hanover,[1] and was accompanied on this honorable mission by Addison, who had just been made undersecretary of state. The secretary of state under whom Addison first served was Sir Charles Hedges,[2] a Tory; but Hedges was soon dismissed to make room for the most vehement of Whigs, Charles, Earl of Sunderland. In every department of the state, indeed, the High Churchmen were compelled to give place to their opponents. At the close of 1707, the Tories who still remained in office strove to rally, with Harley[3] at their head; but the attempt, though favored by the Queen, — who had always been a Tory at heart, and who had now quarreled with the Duchess of Marlborough,[4] — was unsuccessful. The time was not yet. The captain-general was at the height of popularity and glory. The Low Church party had a majority in Parliament. The country squires and rectors, though occasionally uttering a savage growl, were for the most part in a state of torpor, which lasted till they were roused into activity, and indeed into madness, by the prosecution of Sacheverell.[5] Harley and his adherents were compelled to retire. The victory of the Whigs was complete. At the general election of 1708, their strength in the House of Commons became irresistible; and

[1] Afterwards George I.

[2] Died 1714.

[3] Robert Harley (1661–1724), Earl of Oxford. See the essay on Johnson, page 15, note 1.

[4] The notorious Sarah Jennings (1660–1744), whose control over her husband, and, for a time, the queen, is familiar to all students of the period.

[5] See the essay on Johnson, page 16, note 4. The famous Tory preacher had been a college-mate of Addison's.

before the end of that year Somers was made lord president of the Council, and Wharton[1] lord lieutenant of Ireland.

Addison sat for Malmesbury[2] in the House of Commons which was elected in 1708, but the House of Commons was not the field for him. The bashfulness of his nature made his wit and eloquence useless in debate. He once rose, but could not overcome his diffidence, and ever after remained silent. Nobody can think it strange that a great writer should fail as a speaker; but many probably will think it strange that Addison's failure as a speaker should have had no unfavorable effect on his success as a politician. In our time, a man of high rank and great fortune might, though speaking very little and very ill, hold a considerable post; but it would now be inconceivable that a mere adventurer — a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen — should in a few years become successively undersecretary of state, chief secretary for Ireland, and secretary of state, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth and with little property, rose to a post which dukes, the heads of the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck,[3] have thought it an honor to fill. Without opening his lips in debate, he rose to a post the highest that Chatham or Fox ever reached; and this he did before he had been nine years in Parliament. We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar

[1] Thomas, Marquis of Wharton (1640–1715), one of the ablest Whigs.

[2] A market town of Wilts, in which county he had been born.

[3] The family names of the Dukes of Shrewsbury, Bedford, and Portland.

circumstances in which that generation was placed. During the interval which elapsed between the time when the censorship of the press ceased, and the time when parliamentary proceedings began to be freely reported, literary talents were, to a public man, of much more importance, and oratorical talents of much less importance, than in our time. At present, the best way of giving rapid and wide publicity to a fact or an argument is to introduce that fact or argument into a speech made in Parliament. If a political tract were to appear superior to "The Conduct of the Allies,"[1] or to the best numbers of "The Freeholder," the circulation of such a tract would be languid indeed, when compared with the circulation of every remarkable word uttered in the deliberations of the Legislature. A speech made in the House of Commons at four in the morning is on thirty thousand tables before ten. A speech made on the Monday is read on the Wednesday by multitudes in Antrim and Aberdeenshire.[2] The orator, by the help of the shorthand writer, has to a great extent superseded the pamphleteer. It was not so in the reign of Anne. The best speech could then produce no effect except on those who heard it. It was only by means of the press that the opinion of the public without doors could be influenced; and the opinion of the public without doors could not but be of the highest importance in a country governed by parliaments, and indeed at that time governed by triennial parliaments. The pen was therefore a more formidable

[1] By Dean Swift (1711).

[2] Counties in northern Ireland and Scotland; *i. e.*, to the farthest parts of the empire. Note how fond Macaulay is of the concrete rather than the general statement.

political engine than the tongue. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox contended only in Parliament. But Walpole and Pulteney,[1] the Pitt and Fox of an earlier period, had not done half of what was necessary when they sat down amidst the acclamations of the House of Commons. They had still to plead their cause before the country, and this they could do only by means of the press. Their works are now forgotten; but it is certain that there were in Grub Street[2] few more assiduous scribblers of Thoughts, Letters, Answers, Remarks, than these two great chiefs of parties. Pulteney, when leader of the Opposition, and possessed of thirty thousand a year, edited "The Craftsman."[3] Walpole, though not a man of literary habits, was the author of at least ten pamphlets, and retouched and corrected many more. These facts sufficiently show of how great importance literary assistance then was to the contending parties. St. John[4] was certainly, in Anne's reign, the best Tory speaker; Cowper was probably the best Whig speaker: but it may well be doubted whether St. John did so much for the Tories as Swift, and whether Cowper did so much for the Whigs as Addison. When these things are duly considered, it will not be thought strange that Addison should have climbed higher in

[1] See the essay on Milton, page 11, note 3, and the essay on Johnson, page 16, note 1.

[2] See the essay on Johnson, page 22, note 1.

[3] This paper, which embarrassed Walpole, began on December 5, 1726, and ran for a considerable time, filling fourteen volumes in its collected form.

[4] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), one of the most noted and least trustworthy politicians of the time, also a writer of once great but now much diminished repute. Pope inscribed to him the *Essay on Man*.

the state than any other Englishman has ever, by means merely of literary talents, been able to climb. Swift would in all probability have climbed as high if he had not been encumbered by his cassock and his pudding sleeves.[1] As far as the homage of the great went, Swift had as much of it as if he had been lord treasurer.

To the influence which Addison derived from his literary talents was added all the influence which arises from character. The world, always ready to think the worst of needy political adventurers, was forced to make one exception. Restlessness, violence, audacity, laxity of principle, are the vices ordinarily attributed to that class of men. But faction itself could not deny that Addison had, through all changes of fortune, been strictly faithful to his early opinions and to his early friends; that his integrity was without stain; that his whole deportment indicated a fine sense of the becoming; that, in the utmost heat of controversy, his zeal was tempered by a regard for truth, humanity, and social decorum; that no outrage could ever provoke him to retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman; and that his only faults were a too sensitive delicacy and a modesty which amounted to bashfulness.

He was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to that very timidity which his friends lamented. That timidity often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage, but it propitiated Nemesis. It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splen-

[1] "Pudding sleeves" refers to the full sleeves of the black gowns worn by the clergy.

did, and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favorite with the public as he who is at once an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montagu[1] said that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own that there was a charm in Addison's talk which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella[2] that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite and the most mirthful that could be imagined; that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young, an excellent judge of serious conversation, said that when Addison was at his ease he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were Addison's great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart which appeared in his conversation. At the same time, it would be too much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ludicrous. He had one

[1] See page 201; also the essay on Johnson, page 31, note 2.

[2] Swift's name for Miss Esther Johnson (1681–1728), with whom he corresponded for a long while and whom he finally married.

habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, "assented with civil leer,"[1] and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice we should, we think, have guessed from his works. "The Tatler's" criticisms on Mr. Softly's sonnet, and "The Spectator's" dialogue with the politician who is so zealous for the honor of Lady Q—p—t—s, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.

Such were Addison's talents for conversation. But his rare gifts were not exhibited to crowds or to strangers. As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed, and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table from the time when the play ended till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden struck four. Yet, even at such a table, he was not seen to the best advantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection, it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. "There is no such thing," he used to say, "as real conversation but between two persons."

This timidity — a timidity surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable — led Addison into the two most serious faults which can with justice be imputed to him. He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that

[1] From Pope's lines on Addison quoted later.

age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadillos, and was so far from being a mark of ill-breeding that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground, and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign, we should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

To the excessive modesty of Addison's nature we must ascribe another fault, which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers to whom he was as a king, or rather as a god. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did those faults escape his observation; for, if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But, with the keenest observation and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinctured with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell,[1] or Warburton by Hurd.[2] It was not in

[1] James Boswell (1740–1795). See Macaulay's essays on Johnson and on Boswell's Life of Johnson.

[2] Richard Hurd (1720–1808) was a friend and disciple of Warburton (see the essay on Johnson, page 22, note 3), who was something of a scholar, became Bishop of Worcester, and declined to be Archbishop of Canterbury. He edited Addison.

the power of adulation to turn such a head, or deprave such a heart, as Addison's; but it must in candor be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie.

One member of this little society was Eustace Budgell,[1] a young templar of some literature,[2] and a distant relation of Addison. There was at this time no stain on the character of Budgell; and it is not improbable that his career would have been prosperous and honorable if the life of his cousin had been prolonged. But when the master was laid in the grave, the disciple broke loose from all restraint, descended rapidly from one degree of vice and misery to another, ruined his fortune by follies, attempted to repair it by crimes, and at length closed a wicked and unhappy life by self-murder. Yet, to the last, the wretched man — gambler, lampooner, cheat, forger, as he was — retained his affection and veneration for Addison, and recorded those feelings in the last lines which he traced before he hid himself from infamy under London Bridge.

Another of Addison's favorite companions was Ambrose Philips, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honor of bringing into fashion a species of composition which has been called, after his name, Namby Pamby. But the most remarkable members of the little senate, as Pope long afterwards called it, were Richard Steele and Thomas Tickell.[3]

[1] 1685–1736.

[2] That is, a lawyer of some literary attainments.

[3] 1686–1740. He edited Addison and wrote an elegy on his death which is noticed farther on. The rest of his poetry is worth little.

Steele had known Addison from childhood. They had been together at the Charter House and at Oxford; but circumstances had then, for a time, separated them widely. Steele had left college without taking a degree, had been disinherited by a rich relation, had led a vagrant life, had served in the army, had tried to find the philosopher's stone, and had written a religious treatise and several comedies. He was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation he was a man of piety and honor; in practice he was much of the rake and a little of the swindler. He was, however, so good-natured that it was not easy to be seriously angry with him, and that even rigid moralists felt more inclined to pity than to blame him when he diced himself into a sponging-house or drank himself into a fever. Addison regarded Steele with kindness not unmingled with scorn; tried, with little success, to keep him out of scrapes; introduced him to the great; procured a good place for him; corrected his plays; and, though by no means rich, lent him large sums of money. One of these loans appears, from a letter dated in August, 1708, to have amounted to a thousand pounds. These pecuniary transactions probably led to frequent bickerings. It is said that, on one occasion, Steele's negligence or dishonesty provoked Addison to repay himself by the help of a bailiff. We cannot join with Miss Aikin in rejecting this story. Johnson heard it from Savage,[1] who

[1] For this minor poet, see the essay on Johnson, page 58, text and note.

heard it from Steele. Few private transactions which took place a hundred and twenty years ago are proved by stronger evidence than this.[1] But we can by no means agree with those who condemn Addison's severity. The most amiable of mankind may well be moved to indignation when what he has earned hardly, and lent with great inconvenience to himself, for the purpose of relieving a friend in distress, is squandered with insane profusion. We will illustrate our meaning by an example which is not the less striking because it is taken from fiction. Dr. Harrison, in Fielding's[2] "Amelia," is represented as the most benevolent of human beings; yet he takes in execution, not only the goods, but the person, of his friend Booth. Dr. Harrison resorts to this strong measure because he has been informed that Booth, while pleading poverty as an excuse for not paying just debts, has been buying fine jewelry and setting up a coach. No person who is well acquainted with Steele's life and correspondence can doubt that he behaved quite as ill to Addison as Booth was accused of behaving to Dr. Harrison. The real history, we have little doubt, was something like this: a letter comes to Addison, imploring help in pathetic terms, and promising reformation and speedy repayment. Poor Dick declares that he has not an inch of candle, or a bushel of coals, or credit with the butcher for a shoulder of mutton. Addison is moved. He determines to deny himself some medals which are wanting to his series of the Twelve Cæsars,[3] to put off buying the new edition

[1] This whole story is involved in much doubt.

[2] Henry Fielding (1707–1754), author of *Tom Jones*. See the essay on Johnson, page 12, note 4.

[3] That is, the Roman emperors, beginning with Cæsar and ending with Domitian (96 A. D.).

of Bayle's[1] Dictionary, and to wear his old sword and buckles another year; in this way he manages to send a hundred pounds to his friend. The next day he calls on Steele, and finds scores of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The fiddles are playing. The table is groaning under Champagne, Burgundy, and pyramids of sweetmeats. Is it strange that a man whose kindness is thus abused should send sheriff's officers to reclaim what is due to him?

Tickell was a young man, fresh from Oxford, who had introduced himself to public notice by writing a most ingenious and graceful little poem in praise of the opera of "Rosamond." He deserved, and at length attained, the first place in Addison's friendship. For a time Steele and Tickell were on good terms; but they loved Addison too much to love each other, and at length became as bitter enemies as the rival bulls in Virgil.[2]

At the close of 1708 Wharton became lord lieutenant of Ireland, and appointed Addison chief secretary. Addison was consequently under the necessity of quitting London for Dublin. Besides the chief secretaryship, which was then worth about two thousand pounds a year, he obtained a patent appointing him keeper of the Irish Records for life, with a salary of three or four hundred a year. Budgell accompanied his cousin in the capacity of private secretary.

Wharton and Addison had nothing in common but Whiggism. The lord lieutenant was not only licen-

[1] Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), a celebrated French critic and freethinker, best known for his *Critical and Historical Dictionary*, which is hardly a dictionary at all, but a storehouse of miscellaneous information. Addison spent much time over it.

[2] *Georgics*, iii. 220–225.

tious and corrupt, but was distinguished from other libertines and jobbers by a callous impudence which presented the strongest contrast to the secretary's gentleness and delicacy. Many parts of the Irish administration at this time appear to have deserved serious blame, but against Addison there was not a murmur. He long afterwards asserted, what all the evidence which we have ever seen tends to prove, that his diligence and integrity gained the friendship of all the most considerable persons in Ireland.

The parliamentary career of Addison in Ireland has, we think, wholly escaped the notice of all his biographers. He was elected member for the borough of Cavan in the summer of 1709, and in the journals of two sessions his name frequently occurs. Some of the entries appear to indicate that he so far overcame his timidity as to make speeches. Nor is this by any means improbable, for the Irish House of Commons was a far less formidable audience than the English House, and many tongues which were tied by fear in the greater assembly became fluent in the smaller. Gerard Hamilton,[1] for example, who, from fear of losing the fame gained by his single speech, sat mute at Westminster during forty years, spoke with great effect at Dublin when he was secretary to Lord Halifax.[2]

While Addison was in Ireland, an event occurred to which he owes his high and permanent rank among British writers. As yet his fame rested on perfor-

[1] William Gerard Hamilton (1729–1796), nicknamed "Single-Speech Hamilton," on account of his brilliant speech of November 13, 1755, after which he kept silent except for one occasion, although he sat in every Parliament till his death.

[2] George Montagu Dunk, Earl of Halifax (1716–1771), Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1761.

mances which, though highly respectable, were not built for duration, and which would, if he had produced nothing else, have now been almost forgotten, — on some excellent Latin verses, on some English verses which occasionally rose above mediocrity, and on a book of travels, agreeably written, but not indicating any extraordinary powers of mind. These works showed him to be a man of taste, sense, and learning. The time had come when he was to prove himself a man of genius, and to enrich our literature with compositions which will live as long as the English language.

In the spring of 1709 Steele formed a literary project,[1] of which he was far indeed from foreseeing the consequences. Periodical papers had during many years been published in London. Most of these were political; but in some of them questions of morality, taste, and love casuistry had been discussed. The literary merit of these works was small indeed, and even their names are now known only to the curious.

Steele had been appointed gazetteer[2] by Sunderland, at the request, it is said, of Addison, and thus had access to foreign intelligence earlier and more authentic than was in those times within the reach of an ordinary news-writer.[3] This circumstance seems to have suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan. It was to appear on the days on which the post left London for the country, which were, in that generation, the Tuesdays,

[1] *The Tatler* ran from April 12, 1709, to January 2, 1710–11.

[2] That is, publisher of news authorized by the government.

[3] See, for an account of these men, who furnished news to the remote districts, Macaulay's *History*, chap. iii., and *The Tatler*, No. 18.

Thursdays, and Saturdays. It was to contain the foreign news, accounts of theatrical representations, and the literary gossip of Will's and of the Grecian.[1] It was also to contain remarks on the fashionable topics of the day, compliments to beauties, pasquinades[2] on noted sharpers, and criticisms on popular preachers. The aim of Steele does not appear to have been at first higher than this. He was not ill-qualified to conduct the work which he had planned. His public intelligence he drew from the best sources. He knew the town, and had paid dear for his knowledge. He had read much more than the dissipated men of that time were in the habit of reading. He was a rake among scholars and a scholar among rakes. His style was easy and not incorrect, and, though his wit and humor were of no high order, his gay animal spirits imparted to his compositions an air of vivacity which ordinary readers could hardly distinguish from comic genius. His writings have been well compared to those light wines which, though deficient in body and flavor, are yet a pleasant small drink if not kept too long or carried too far.

Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., astrologer, was an imaginary person, almost as well known in that age as Mr. Paul Pry[3] or Mr. Samuel Pickwick in ours. Swift had assumed the name of Bickerstaff in a satirical pamphlet against Partridge,[4] the maker of alma-

[1] Well-known coffee-houses of the period.

[2] That is, lampoons, so called from Pasquino, an Italian cobbler of caustic wit (fifteenth century).

[3] A character giving the name to a well-known comedy of John Poole's (about 1840).

[4] John Partridge (died 1715). See Gosse. Swift published his *Predictions for the Year 1708* as a joke on Partridge's vague prognostications, and among other things prophesied that Par-

nacs. Partridge had been fool enough to publish a furious reply. Bickerstaff had rejoined in a second pamphlet, still more diverting than the first. All the wits had combined to keep up the joke, and the town was long in convulsions of laughter. Steele determined to employ the name which this controversy had made popular; and in 1709 it was announced that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., astrologer, was about to publish a paper called "The Tatler."

Addison had not been consulted about this scheme; but, as soon as he heard of it, he determined to give his assistance. The effect of that assistance cannot be better described than in Steele's own words. "I fared," he said, "like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbor to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." "The paper," he says elsewhere, "was advanced indeed. It was raised to a greater thing than I intended it."

It is probable that Addison, when he sent across St. George's Channel his first contributions to "The Tatler," had no notion of the extent and variety of his own powers. He was the possessor of a vast mine, rich with a hundred ores; but he had been acquainted only with the least precious part of his treasures, and had hitherto contented himself with producing sometimes copper and sometimes lead, intermingled with a little silver. All at once, and by mere accident, he had lighted on an inexhaustible vein of the finest gold.

tridge would die at eleven o'clock on the night of March 29th. Immediately after this date he issued another pamphlet giving an *Account of Partridge's Death.* The poor fellow expostulated, but was overwhelmed with replies.

The mere choice and arrangement of his words would have sufficed to make his essays classical; for never — not even by Dryden, not even by Temple[1] — had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace, and facility. But this was the smallest part of Addison's praise. Had he clothed his thoughts in the half French style of Horace Walpole,[2] or in the half Latin style of Dr. Johnson, or in the half German jargon of the present day,[3] his genius would have triumphed over all faults of manner. As a moral satirist he stands unrivaled. If ever the best "Tatlers" and "Spectators" were equaled in their own kind, we should be inclined to guess that it must have been by the lost comedies of Menander.[4]

In wit, properly so called, Addison was not inferior to Cowley[5] or Butler.[6] No single ode of Cowley contains so many happy analogies as are crowded into the lines to Sir Godfrey Kneller;[7] and we would undertake to collect from the "Spectators" as great a number of ingenious illustrations as can be found in "Hudibras." The still higher faculty of inven-

[1] Sir William Temple (1628–1699), a well-known diplomatist and essayist, noted for his style. See Macaulay's essay on him.

[2] Earl of Orford (1717–1797), son of Sir Robert, famous as a dilettante and for his *Letters*.

[3] A reference to Carlyle.

[4] The Greek comic poet (342–291 B. C. *circa*). Only fragments of his numerous comedies are extant, but they had a great reputation among the ancients.

[5] See the essay on Milton, page 6, note 3.

[6] Samuel Butler (1612–1680), the famous author of *Hudibras*. See Gosse and Ward's *English Poets*.

[7] The well-known portrait painter (1648–1723). The lines by Addison referred to are felicitous, but not with the curious, unexpected felicity of Cowley at his best.

tion Addison possessed in still larger measure. The numerous fictions, generally original, often wild and grotesque, but always singularly graceful and happy, which are found in his essays, fully entitle him to the rank of a great poet, — a rank to which his metrical compositions give him no claim. As an observer of life, of manners, of all the shades of human character, he stands in the first class; and what he observed he had the art of communicating in two widely different ways. He could describe virtues, vices, habits, whims, as well as Clarendon.[1] But he could do something better: he could call human beings into existence, and make them exhibit themselves. If we wish to find anything more vivid than Addison's best portraits, we must go either to Shakespeare or to Cervantes.

But what shall we say of Addison's humor, of his sense of the ludicrous, of his power of awakening that sense in others, and of drawing mirth from incidents which occur every day, and from little peculiarities of temper and manner such as may be found in every man? We feel the charm; we give ourselves up to it: but we strive in vain to analyze it.

Perhaps the best way of describing Addison's peculiar pleasantry is to compare it with the pleasantry of some other great satirists. The three most eminent masters of the art of ridicule during the eighteenth century were, we conceive, Addison, Swift, and Voltaire. Which of the three had the greatest power of moving laughter may be questioned; but each of them, within his own domain, was supreme.

[1] Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* is noted for its sketches of character.

Voltaire is the prince of buffoons. His merriment is without disguise or restraint. He gambols; he grins; he shakes the sides; he points the finger; he turns up the nose; he shoots out the tongue.[1] The manner of Swift is the very opposite to this. He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appeared in society. All the company are convulsed with merriment; while the Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity and even sourness of aspect, and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies with the air of a man reading the commination service.[2]

The manner of Addison is as remote from that of Swift as from that of Voltaire. He neither laughs out like the French wit, nor, like the Irish wit, throws a double portion of severity into his countenance while laughing inwardly, but preserves a look peculiarly his own, — a look of demure serenity, disturbed only by an arch sparkle of the eye, an almost imperceptible elevation of the brow, an almost imperceptible curl of the lip. His tone is never that either of a Jack Pudding or of a Cynic.[3] It is that of a gentleman in whom the quickest sense of the ridiculous is constantly tempered by good-nature and good-breeding.

We own that the humor of Addison is, in our opinion, of more delicious flavor than the humor of either

[1] Probably an example of Macaulay's characteristic exaggeration.

[2] A service of the English Church, read on Ash Wednesday, reciting God's anger against sinners.

[3] That is, of a merry-andrew or buffoon, or of a snarling philosopher like Diogenes.

Swift or Voltaire. Thus much, at least, is certain, that both Swift and Voltaire have been successfully mimicked, and that no man has yet been able to mimic Addison. The letter of the Abbé Coyer[1] to Pansophe is Voltaire all over, and imposed, during a long time, on the Academicians of Paris. There are passages in Arbuthnot's[2] satirical works which we, at least, cannot distinguish from Swift's best writing. But of the many eminent men who have made Addison their model, though several have copied his mere diction with happy effect, none has been able to catch the tone of his pleasantry. In "The World," in "The Connoisseur," in "The Mirror," in "The Lounger,"[3] there are numerous papers written in obvious imitation of his "Tatlers" and "Spectators." Most of those papers have some merit; many are very lively and amusing; but there is not a single one which could be passed off as Addison's on a critic of the smallest perspicacity.

But that which chiefly distinguishes Addison from Swift, from Voltaire, from almost all the other great masters of ridicule, is the grace, the nobleness, the

[1] Gabriel François Coyer (died in 1782, very old), a Jesuit who resigned from his order and devoted himself to letters. He translated Blackstone, and wrote *Bagatelles Morales*.

[2] Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), the friend of Pope and Swift, and a noted wit. He wrote most, if not all, of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, which Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* has now eclipsed, and a *History of John Bull*, besides dissertations on medals, etc., and some medical works.

[3] Papers in imitation of *The Spectator*. *The World* (1753–56) was edited by the poet Edward Moore; *The Connoisseur* (1754–56) was edited by George Colman and Bennet Thornton; *The Mirror* (1779–80) and *The Lounger* (1785–87) were Edinburgh journals, to which Henry Mackenzie was the chief contributor.

moral purity, which we find even in his merriment. Severity, gradually hardening and darkening into misanthropy, characterizes the works of Swift. The nature of Voltaire was, indeed, not inhuman; but he venerated nothing. Neither in the masterpieces of art nor in the purest examples of virtue, neither in the Great First Cause nor in the awful enigma of the grave, could he see anything but subjects for drollery.[1] The more solemn and august the theme, the more monkey-like was his grimacing and chattering. The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistopheles;[2] the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck.[3] If, as Soame Jenyns[4] oddly imagined, a portion of the happiness of seraphim and just men made perfect be derived from an exquisite perception of the ludicrous, their mirth must surely be none other than the mirth of Addison, — a mirth consistent with tender compassion for all that is frail, and with profound reverence for all that is sublime. Nothing great, nothing amiable, no moral duty, no doctrine of natural or revealed religion, has ever been associated by Addison with any degrading idea. His humanity is without a parallel in literary history. The highest proof of virtue is to possess boundless power without abusing it. No kind of power is more formidable than the power of making men ridiculous, and that power Addison possessed in boundless measure. How grossly that power was abused by Swift and by Voltaire is well known. But of Addison it may be confidently affirmed that he has blackened no man's character;

[1] This statement is more than questionable.

[2] The cynical demon of Goethe's *Faust*.

[3] The aerial spirit of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

[4] See the essay on Johnson, page 34, note 2.

nay, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find in all the volumes which he has left us a single taunt which can be called ungenerous or unkind. Yet he had detractors, whose malignity might have seemed to justify as terrible a revenge as that which men not superior to him in genius wreaked on Bettesworth[1] and on Franc de Pompignan.[2] He was a politician; he was the best writer of his party; he lived in times of fierce excitement, — in times when persons of high character and station stooped to scurrility such as is now practiced only by the basest of mankind: yet no provocation and no example could induce him to return railing for railing.

Of the service which his essays rendered to morality it is difficult to speak too highly. It is true that, when "The Tatler" appeared, that age of outrageous profaneness and licentiousness which followed the Restoration had passed away. Jeremy Collier[3] had shamed the theatres into something which, compared with the excesses of Etherege and Wycherley,[4] might be called decency; yet there still lingered in the public mind a pernicious notion that there was some con-

[1] A Dublin lawyer satirized by Swift.

[2] Jean Jacques le Franc, Marquis of Pompignan (1709–1784), author of the once famous tragedy of *Dido*, who on his election to the French Academy in 1760 delivered a discourse defending Christianity, which was satirized by Voltaire and others.

[3] 1650–1726. A nonjuring preacher (*i. e.*, one who refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary), who attacked the vices of the stage in a book which Dryden, one of the offending dramatists, had to admit to be fully founded on facts.

[4] Sir George Etherege (1636–1694) and William Wycherley (1640–1715), noted representatives of the comic drama of the Restoration, which reached its highest point in Congreve.

nection between genius and profligacy, between the domestic virtues and the sullen formality of the Puritans. That error it is the glory of Addison to have dispelled. He taught the nation that the faith and the morality of Hale[1] and Tillotson might be found in company with wit more sparkling than the wit of Congreve, and with humor richer than the humor of Vanbrugh.[2] So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that since his time the open violation of decency has always been considered among us as the mark of a fool. And this revolution, the greatest and most salutary ever effected by any satirist, he accomplished, be it remembered, without writing one personal lampoon.

In the early contributions of Addison to "The Tatler" his peculiar powers were not fully exhibited, yet from the first his superiority to all his coadjutors was evident. Some of his later "Tatlers" are fully equal to anything that he ever wrote. Among the portraits, we most admire Tom Folio, Ned Softly, and the Political Upholsterer. The proceedings of the "Court of Honor," the "Thermometer of Zeal," the story of the "Frozen Words," the "Memoirs of the Shilling," are excellent specimens of that ingenious and lively species of fiction in which Addison excelled all men. There is one still better paper of the same class; but though that paper, a hundred and thirty-three years

[1] Sir Matthew Hale (1607–1676), the great Chief Justice, as much noted for his probity of character as for his juristic attainments.

[2] Sir John Vanbrugh (1666–1726), another of the comic dramatists of the Restoration, humorous but coarse.

ago, was probably thought as edifying as one of Smalridge's[1] sermons, we dare not indicate it to the squeamish readers of the nineteenth century.

During the session of Parliament which commenced in November, 1709, and which the impeachment of Sacheverell has made memorable, Addison appears to have resided in London. "The Tatler" was now more popular than any periodical paper had ever been, and his connection with it was generally known: it was not known, however, that almost everything good in "The Tatler" was his. The truth is, that the fifty or sixty numbers which we owe to him were not merely the best, but so decidedly the best that any five of them are more valuable than all the two hundred numbers in which he had no share.[2]

He required at this time all the solace which he could derive from literary success. The Queen had always disliked the Whigs. She had during some years disliked the Marlborough family: but, reigning by a disputed title, she could not venture directly to oppose herself to a majority of both houses of Parliament; and, engaged as she was in a war on the event of which her own crown was staked, she could not venture to disgrace a great and successful general. But at length, in the year 1710, the causes which had restrained her from showing her aversion to the Low Church party ceased to operate. The trial of Sacheverell produced an outbreak of public feeling scarcely less violent than the outbreaks which we can ourselves

[1] George Smalridge, D. D. (1666–1719), noted scholar and divine, died Bishop of Bristol. He is the Favonius of *The Tatler*, No. 114.

[2] Almost certainly an exaggeration.

remember in 1820 and in 1831.[1] The country gentlemen, the country clergymen, the rabble of the towns, were all, for once, on the same side. It was clear that, if a general election took place before the excitement abated, the Tories would have a majority. The services of Marlborough had been so splendid that they were no longer necessary. The Queen's throne was secure from all attack on the part of Louis; indeed, it seemed much more likely that the English and German armies would divide the spoils of Versailles and Marli[2] than that a marshal of France would bring back the Pretender[3] to St. James's.[4] The Queen, acting by the advice of Harley, determined to dismiss her servants. In June the change commenced. Sunderland was the first who fell. The Tories exulted over his fall. The Whigs tried, during a few weeks, to persuade themselves that her Majesty had acted only from personal dislike to the secretary, and that she meditated no further alteration; but, early in August, Godolphin was surprised by a letter from Anne which directed him to break his white staff.[5] Even after this event, the irresolution or dissimulation of Harley kept up the hopes of the Whigs during another month, and then the ruin

[1] In 1820 the Reform agitation, the Cato Street Conspiracy, riots in Scotland, the trial of Queen Caroline. In 1831 the agitation over the defeat of the bill for Parliamentary Reform (carried in 1832).

[2] Marli was noted for the sumptuous gardens and château of Louis XIV. It was five miles north of Versailles, where the King's great palace was.

[3] See the essay on Milton, page 62, note 4.

[4] St. James's Palace, in London, long a residence of the British sovereigns.

[5] The sign of the office of Lord High Treasurer.

became rapid and violent. The Parliament was dissolved. The ministers were turned out. The Tories were called to office. The tide of popularity ran violently in favor of the High Church party. That party, feeble in the late House of Commons, was now irresistible. The power which the Tories had thus suddenly acquired, they used with blind and stupid ferocity. The howl which the whole pack set up for prey and for blood appalled even him [1] who had roused and unchained them. When, at this distance of time, we calmly review the conduct of the discarded ministers, we cannot but feel a movement of indignation at the injustice with which they were treated. No body of men had ever administered the government with more energy, ability, and moderation; and their success had been proportioned to their wisdom. They had saved Holland and Germany. They had humbled France. They had, as it seemed, all but torn Spain from the house of Bourbon. They had made England the first power in Europe. At home they had united England and Scotland.[2] They had respected the rights of conscience and the liberty of the subject. They retired leaving their country at the height of prosperity and glory. And yet they were pursued to their retreat by such a roar of obloquy as was never raised against the government which threw away thirteen colonies, or against the government which sent a gallant army to perish in the ditches of Walcheren.[3]

[1] Harley.

[2] By the Act of Union, 1706.

[3] An island in the Dutch province of Zealand. In 1809 an expedition was sent thither in order to divert Napoleon for the benefit of Austria. The troops were taken with malaria, and thousands perished, so that the enterprise had to be abandoned,

None of the Whigs suffered more in the general wreck than Addison. He had just sustained some heavy pecuniary losses, of the nature of which we are imperfectly informed, when his secretaryship was taken from him. He had reason to believe that he should also be deprived of the small Irish office which he held by patent. He had just resigned his fellowship. It seems probable that he had already ventured to raise his eyes to a great lady,[1] and that while his political friends were in power, and while his own fortunes were rising, he had been, in the phrase of the romances which were then fashionable, "permitted to hope." But Mr. Addison the ingenious writer, and Mr. Addison the chief secretary, were, in her ladyship's opinion, two very different persons. All these calamities united, however, could not disturb the serene cheerfulness of a mind conscious of innocence, and rich in its own wealth. He told his friends, with smiling resignation, that they ought to admire his philosophy; that he had lost at once his fortune, his place, his fellowship, and his mistress; that he must think of turning tutor again; and yet that his spirits were as good as ever.

He had one consolation. Of the unpopularity which his friends had incurred, he had no share. Such was the esteem with which he was regarded that, while the most violent measures were taken for the purpose of forcing Tory members on Whig corporations,[2] he was returned to Parliament without even

after having accomplished nothing, and having cost about twenty million pounds.

[1] The Countess Dowager of Warwick. See page 206.

[2] That is, on boroughs that usually returned Whig members of Parliament.

a contest. Swift, who was now in London, and who had already determined on quitting the Whigs, wrote to Stella in these remarkable words: "The Tories carry it among the new members six to one. Mr. Addison's election has passed easy and undisputed, and I believe, if he had a mind to be king, he would hardly be refused."

The good will with which the Tories regarded Addison is the more honorable to him, because it had not been purchased by any concession on his part. During the general election, he published a political journal entitled "The Whig Examiner."[1] Of that journal it may be sufficient to say that Johnson, in spite of his strong political prejudice, pronounced it to be superior in wit to any of Swift's writings on the other side.[2] When it ceased to appear, Swift, in a letter to Stella, expressed his exultation at the death of so formidable an antagonist. "He might well rejoice," says Johnson, "at the death of that which he could not have killed." "On no occasion," he adds, "was the genius of Addison more vigorously exerted, and on none did the superiority of his powers more evidently appear."

The only use which Addison appears to have made of the favor with which he was regarded by the Tories was to save some of his friends from the general ruin of the Whig party. He felt himself to be in a situation which made it his duty to take a decided part in politics. But the case of Steele and of

[1] Five numbers appeared, — Thursday, September 14, to Thursday, October 12, 1710.

[2] Swift was writing for *The Examiner*, a Tory organ, which seems to have run from August 3, 1710, to July 26, 1714. He was also writing pamphlets.

Ambrose Philips was different. For Philips, Addison even condescended to solicit, with what success we have not ascertained. Steele held two places: he was gazetteer, and he was also a commissioner of stamps. The gazette was taken from him, but he was suffered to retain his place in the Stamp Office on an implied understanding that he should not be active against the new government; and he was, during more than two years, induced by Addison to observe this armistice with tolerable fidelity.

Isaac Bickerstaff accordingly became silent upon politics, and the article of news which had once formed about one third of his paper altogether disappeared. "The Tatler" had completely changed its character: it was now nothing but a series of essays on books, morals, and manners. Steele, therefore, resolved to bring it to a close, and to commence a new work on an improved plan. It was announced that this new work would be published daily. The undertaking was generally regarded as bold, or rather rash; but the event amply justified the confidence with which Steele relied on the fertility of Addison's genius. On the 2d of January, 1711, appeared the last "Tatler." At the beginning of March following, appeared the first of an incomparable series of papers, containing observations on life and literature by an imaginary Spectator.[1]

The Spectator himself was conceived and drawn by Addison, and it is not easy to doubt that the portrait

[1] *The Spectator* ran from Thursday, March 1, 1710–11, to Saturday, December 6, 1712, —555 daily numbers. On Friday, June 18, 1714, Addison took it up in tri-weekly numbers, and continued it to Monday, December 20, 1714, —making in all 635 numbers.

was meant to be in some features a likeness of the painter. The Spectator is a gentleman who, after passing a studious youth at the university, has traveled on classic ground, and has bestowed much attention on curious points of antiquity. He has, on his return, fixed his residence in London, and has observed all the forms of life which are to be found in that great city; has daily listened to the wits of Will's, has smoked with the philosophers of the Grecian, and has mingled with the parsons at Child's and with the politicians at the St. James's. In the morning he often listens to the hum of the Exchange; in the evening his face is constantly to be seen in the pit of Drury Lane Theatre. But an insurmountable bashfulness prevents him from opening his mouth, except in a small circle of intimate friends.

These friends were first sketched by Steele. Four of the club — the templar, the clergyman, the soldier, and the merchant — were uninteresting figures, fit only for a background; but the other two, — an old country baronet and an old town rake, — though not delineated with a very delicate pencil, had some good strokes. Addison took the rude outlines into his own hands, retouched them, colored them, and is in truth the creator of the Sir Roger de Coverley and the Will Honeycomb with whom we are all familiar.

The plan of "The Spectator" must be allowed to be both original and eminently happy. Every valuable essay in the series may be read with pleasure separately; yet the five or six hundred essays form a whole, and a whole which has the interest of a novel. It must be remembered, too, that at that time no novel giving a lively and powerful picture of the common life and manners of England had ap-

peared. Richardson[1] was working as a compositor. Fielding was robbing birds'-nests. Smollett[2] was not yet born. The narrative, therefore, which connects together the Spectator's essays gave to our ancestors their first taste of an exquisite and untried pleasure. That narrative was indeed constructed with no art or labor. The events were such events as occur every day. Sir Roger comes up to town to see Eugenio, as the worthy baronet always calls Prince Eugene, goes with the Spectator on the water to Spring Gardens,[3] walks among the tombs in the Abbey, and is frightened by the Mohawks,[4] but conquers his apprehension so far as to go to the theatre when "The Distressed Mother"[5] is acted. The Spectator pays a visit in the summer to Coverley Hall; is charmed with the old house, the old butler, and the old chaplain; eats a jack caught by Will Wimble; rides to the assizes, and hears a point of law discussed by Tom Touchy. At last a letter from the honest butler brings to the club the news that Sir Roger is dead. Will Honeycomb marries and reforms at sixty. The club breaks up, and the Spectator resigns his functions. Such events can hardly be said to form a plot; yet they are related with such truth, such grace, such wit, such humor, such pathos, such know-

[1] See the essay on Johnson, page 28, note 3.

[2] Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), the great Scotch story-teller rather than novelist, author of *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphrey Clinker*, etc.

[3] A pleasure resort at Charing Cross, afterwards the famous Vauxhall. See *The Spectator*, No. 383.

[4] A set of wild young men who assaulted wayfarers at night, and were suppressed with difficulty.

[5] A play by Ambrose Philips, translated from Racine's *Andromache*, for which Addison wrote an epilogue.

ledge of the human heart, such knowledge of the ways of the world, that they charm us on the hundredth perusal. We have not the least doubt that, if Addison had written a novel on an extensive plan, it would have been superior to any that we possess. As it is, he is entitled to be considered not only as the greatest of the English essayists, but as the forerunner of the great English novelists.

We say this of Addison alone, for Addison is the Spectator. About three sevenths of the work are his, and it is no exaggeration to say that his worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors. His best essays approach near to absolute perfection; nor is their excellence more wonderful than their variety. His invention never seems to flag; nor is he ever under the necessity of repeating himself, or of wearing out a subject. There are no dregs in his wine. He regales us after the fashion of that prodigal nabob who held that there was only one good glass in a bottle. As soon as we have tasted the first sparkling foam of a jest, it is withdrawn, and a fresh draught of nectar is at our lips. On the Monday we have an allegory as lively and ingenious as Lucian's "Auction of Lives;"[1] on the Tuesday, an Eastern apologue as richly colored as the tales of Scheherezade;[2] on the Wednesday, a character described with the skill of La Bruyère;[3] on the Thursday, a scene from common life equal to the best chap-

[1] Lucian of Samosata (120–200 A. D. *circa*), the famous Greek satirist, noted for his *Dialogues* against superstition and vice.

[2] That is, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments.*

[3] Jean de la Bruyère (1645–1696), a great French moralist. His chief work is called in brief *The Characters.*

ters in "The Vicar of Wakefield;"[1] on the Friday, some sly Horatian pleasantry on fashionable follies, on hoops, patches, or puppet shows; and on the Saturday, a religious meditation which will bear a comparison with the finest passages in Massillon.[2]

It is dangerous to select where there is so much that deserves the highest praise. We will venture, however, to say that any person who wishes to form a just notion of the extent and variety of Addison's powers will do well to read at one sitting the following papers, — the two "Visits to the Abbey," the "Visit to the Exchange," the "Journal of the Retired Citizen," the "Vision of Mirza," the "Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey," and the "Death of Sir Roger de Coverley."

The least valuable of Addison's contributions to "The Spectator" are, in the judgment of our age, his critical papers; yet his critical papers are always luminous, and often ingenious. The very worst of them must be regarded as creditable to him, when the character of the school in which he had been trained is fairly considered. The best of them were much too good for his readers. In truth, he was not so far behind our generation as he was before his own. No essays in "The Spectator" were more censured and derided than those in which he raised his voice against the contempt with which our fine old ballads were regarded, and showed the scoffers that the same gold which, burnished and polished, gives lustre to the "Æneid" and the Odes of Horace is mingled with the rude dross of "Chevy Chace."

[1] See the essay on Goldsmith, page 77.

[2] Jean Baptiste Massillon (1663–1742), the famous French preacher.

It is not strange that the success of "The Spectator" should have been such as no similar work has ever obtained. The number of copies daily distributed was at first three thousand. It subsequently increased, and had risen to near four thousand when the stamp tax was imposed. That tax was fatal to a crowd of journals. "The Spectator," however, stood its ground, doubled its price, and, though its circulation fell off, still yielded a large revenue both to the state and to the authors. For particular papers the demand was immense; of some, it is said, twenty thousand copies were required. But this was not all. To have "The Spectator" served up every morning with the bohea and rolls was a luxury for the few. The majority were content to wait till essays enough had appeared to form a volume. Ten thousand copies of each volume were immediately taken off, and new editions were called for. It must be remembered that the population of England was then hardly a third of what it now is. The number of Englishmen who were in the habit of reading was probably not a sixth of what it now is. A shopkeeper or a farmer who found any pleasure in literature was a rarity. Nay, there was doubtless more than one knight of the shire[1] whose country-seat did not contain ten books, receipt books and books on farriery included. In these circumstances, the sale of "The Spectator" must be considered as indicating a popularity quite as great as that of the most successful works of Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Dickens in our own time.

At the close of 1712 "The Spectator" ceased to appear. It was probably felt that the short-faced

[1] A member of the House of Commons for a county at large.

gentleman and his club had been long enough before the town, and that it was time to withdraw them, and to replace them by a new set of characters. In a few weeks the first number of "The Guardian"[1] was published; but "The Guardian" was unfortunate both in its birth and in its death. It began in dullness, and disappeared in a tempest of faction. The original plan was bad. Addison contributed nothing till sixty-six numbers had appeared; and it was then impossible to make "The Guardian" what "The Spectator" had been. Nestor Ironside and the Miss Lizards[2] were people to whom even he could impart no interest. He could only furnish some excellent little essays, both serious and comic; and this he did.

Why Addison gave no assistance to "The Guardian" during the first two months of its existence is a question which has puzzled the editors and biographers, but which seems to us to admit of a very easy solution. He was then engaged in bringing his "Cato" on the stage.

The first four acts of this drama had been lying in his desk since his return from Italy. His modest and sensitive nature shrank from the risk of a public and shameful failure; and, though all who saw the manuscript were loud in praise, some thought it possible that an audience might become impatient even of very good rhetoric, and advised Addison to print the play without hazarding a representation. At length, after many fits of apprehension, the poet yielded to the urgency of his political friends, who hoped that the public would discover some analogy between the

[1] It ran for 175 numbers, being published daily from March 12 to October 1, 1713. Addison wrote 53 numbers.

[2] The Guardian and his wards.

followers of Cæsar and the Tories; between Sempronius [1] and the apostate Whigs; between Cato, struggling to the last for the liberties of Rome, and the band of patriots who still stood firm round Halifax and Wharton.

Addison gave the play to the managers of Drury Lane Theatre without stipulating for any advantage to himself. They therefore thought themselves bound to spare no cost in scenery and dresses. The decorations, it is true, would not have pleased the skillful eye of Mr. Macready.[2] Juba's waistcoat blazed with gold lace; Marcia's hoop was worthy of a duchess on the birthday; [3] and Cato wore a wig worth fifty guineas. The prologue was written by Pope, and is undoubtedly a dignified and spirited composition. The part of the hero was excellently played by Booth.[4] Steele undertook to pack a house. The boxes were in a blaze with the stars [5] of the peers in opposition. The pit was crowded with attentive and friendly listeners from the Inns of Court [6] and the literary coffee-houses. Sir Gilbert Heathcote,[7] governor of the Bank of England, was at the head of a powerful body

[1] A Roman senator, one of the characters of the play.

[2] William Charles Macready (1793–1873), in his prime as a tragedian when this essay was written.

[3] Juba was a prince of Numidia; Marcia, Cato's daughter. "Birthday" refers to the reception held by the sovereign on this anniversary.

[4] Barton Booth (1681–1733), the leading tragedian of the day.

[5] That is, the insignia of the orders (Bath, Garter, etc.) to which they belonged.

[6] Incorporated legal societies in London which have the exclusive privilege of calling candidates to the bar.

[7] 1651–1733. Also Lord Mayor of London; mentioned favorably by both Pope and Swift.

of auxiliaries from the city, warm men and true Whigs, but better known at Jonathan's and Garraway's[1] than in the haunts of wits and critics.

These precautions were quite superfluous. The Tories, as a body, regarded Addison with no unkind feelings. Nor was it for their interest — professing, as they did, profound reverence for law and prescription, and abhorrence both of popular insurrections and of standing armies — to appropriate to themselves reflections thrown on the great military chief and demagogue[2] who, with the support of the legions and of the common people, subverted all the ancient institutions of his country. Accordingly, every shout that was raised by the members of the Kit Cat was echoed by the High Churchmen of the October;[3] and the curtain at length fell amidst thunders of unanimous applause.

The delight and admiration of the town were described by "The Guardian" in terms which we might attribute to partiality, were it not that "The Examiner," the organ of the ministry, held similar language. The Tories, indeed, found much to sneer at in the conduct of their opponents. Steele had, on this as on other occasions, shown more zeal than taste or judgment. The honest citizens who marched under the orders of Sir Gibby,[4] as he was facetiously called, probably knew better when to buy and when to sell stock than when to clap and when to hiss at

[1] Coffee-houses frequented by commercial men.

[2] Cæsar.

[3] A club frequented by Tory members of Parliament where much *October* ale was drunk.

[4] That is, Heathcote, though the sentence reads as if it were Steele.

a play, and incurred some ridicule by making the hypocritical Sempronius their favorite, and by giving to his insincere rants louder plaudits than they bestowed on the temperate eloquence of Cato. Wharton,[1] too, who had the incredible effrontery to applaud the lines about flying from prosperous vice and from the power of impious men to a private station, did not escape the sarcasms of those who justly thought that he could fly from nothing more vicious or impious than himself. The epilogue, which was written by Garth,[2] a zealous Whig, was severely and not unreasonably censured as ignoble and out of place. But Addison was described, even by the bitterest Tory writers, as a gentleman of wit and virtue, in whose friendship many persons of both parties were happy, and whose name ought not to be mixed up with factious squabbles.

Of the jests by which the triumph of the Whig party was disturbed, the most severe and happy was Bolingbroke's. Between two acts he sent for Booth to his box, and presented him, before the whole theatre, with a purse of fifty guineas for defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. This was a pungent allusion to the attempt which Marlborough had made, not long before his fall, to obtain a patent creating him captain-general for life.

It was April, and in April a hundred and thirty years ago the London season was thought to be far advanced. During a whole month, however, "Cato" was performed to overflowing houses, and brought

[1] Philip, Duke of Wharton (1698–1731), son of the Marquis, noted for his debaucheries.

[2] Sir Samuel Garth (1660–1718), physician and poet, author of *The Dispensary*, a mock-heroic poem now little read.

into the treasury of the theatre twice the gains of an ordinary spring. In the summer the Drury Lane company went down to the act[1] at Oxford, and there, before an audience which retained an affectionate remembrance of Addison's accomplishments and virtues, his tragedy was acted during several days. The gownsmen began to besiege the theatre in the forenoon, and by one in the afternoon all the seats were filled.

About the merits of the piece which had so extraordinary an effect, the public, we suppose, has made up its mind. To compare it with the masterpieces of the Attic stage,[2] with the great English dramas of the time of Elizabeth, or even with the productions of Schiller's[3] manhood, would be absurd indeed. Yet it contains excellent dialogue and declamation, and, among plays fashioned on the French model, must be allowed to rank high; not, indeed, with "Athalie" or "Saul," but, we think, not below "Cinna,"[4] and certainly above any other English tragedy of the same school, above many of the plays of Corneille, above many of the plays of Voltaire and Alfieri,[5] and above some plays of Racine. Be this as it may, we have little doubt that "Cato" did as much as the "Tatlers," "Spectators," and "Freeholders" united to raise Addison's fame among his contemporaries.

[1] That is, the occasion of the completion of degrees.

[2] That is, with the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

[3] Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805). Macaulay refers to such plays as *Maria Stuart* and *Wilhelm Tell*.

[4] Dramas by Racine, Alfieri, and Pierre Corneille (1606–1684).

[5] Count Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803), the great Italian tragic poet.

The modesty and good nature of the successful dramatist had tamed even the malignity of faction. But literary envy, it should seem, is a fiercer passion than party spirit. It was by a zealous Whig that the fiercest attack on the Whig tragedy was made. John Dennis[1] published "Remarks on Cato," which were written with some acuteness and with much coarseness and asperity. Addison neither defended himself nor retaliated. On many points he had an excellent defense, and nothing would have been easier than to retaliate, for Dennis had written bad odes, bad tragedies, bad comedies; he had, moreover, a larger share than most men of those infirmities and eccentricities which excite laughter; and Addison's power of turning either an absurd book or an absurd man into ridicule was unrivaled. Addison, however, serenely conscious of his superiority, looked with pity on his assailant, whose temper, naturally irritable and gloomy, had been soured by want, by controversy, and by literary failures.

But among the young candidates for Addison's favor there was one distinguished by talents from the rest, and distinguished, we fear, not less by malignity and insincerity. Pope was only twenty-five. But his powers had expanded to their full maturity; and his best poem, "The Rape of the Lock," had recently been published.[2] Of his genius Addison had always expressed high admiration; but Addison had early discerned, what might, indeed, have been discerned by an eye less penetrating than his, that the diminutive, crooked, sickly boy was eager to revenge himself

[1] 1657–1734. A critic who was himself the butt of Swift and Pope, whose satires have made him live.

[2] In 1714.

on society for the unkindness of nature. In "The Spectator," the "Essay on Criticism" had been praised with cordial warmth; but a gentle hint had been added that the writer of so excellent a poem would have done well to avoid ill-natured personalities. Pope, though evidently more galled by the censure than gratified by the praise, returned thanks for the admonition, and promised to profit by it. The two writers continued to exchange civilities, counsel, and small good offices. Addison publicly extolled Pope's miscellaneous pieces, and Pope furnished Addison with a prologue. This did not last long. Pope hated Dennis, whom he had injured without provocation.[1] The appearance of the "Remarks on Cato" gave the irritable poet an opportunity of venting his malice under the show of friendship; and such an opportunity could not but be welcome to a nature which was implacable in enmity, and which always preferred the tortuous to the straight path. He published, accordingly, "The Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis." But Pope had mistaken his powers. He was a great master of invective and sarcasm; he could dissect a character in terse and sonorous couplets, brilliant with antithesis; but of dramatic talent he was altogether destitute. If he had written a lampoon on Dennis, such as that on Atticus or that on Sporus,[2] the old grumbler would have been crushed. But Pope writing dialogue resembled — to borrow Horace's imagery

[1] Probably in the *Essay on Criticism.*

[2] For the lampoon on Atticus see page 203 and note ; this famous attack, together with that on Sporus (John, Lord Hervey, author of the *Memoirs of the Court of George II.*), occurs in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

and his own — a wolf which, instead of biting, should take to kicking, or a monkey which should try to sting.[1] The "Narrative" is utterly contemptible. Of argument there is not even a show; and the jests are such as, if they were introduced into a farce, would call forth the hisses of the shilling gallery. Dennis raves about the drama, and the nurse thinks that he is calling for a dram. "There is," he cries, "no peripetia[2] in the tragedy, no change of fortune, no change at all." "Pray, good sir, be not angry," says the old woman; "I 'll fetch change." This is not exactly the pleasantry of Addison.[3]

There can be no doubt that Addison saw through this officious zeal, and felt himself deeply aggrieved by it. So foolish and spiteful a pamphlet could do him no good, and, if he were thought to have any hand in it, must do him harm. Gifted with incomparable powers of ridicule, he had never, even in self-defense, used those powers inhumanly or uncourteously; and he was not disposed to let others make his fame and his interests a pretext under which they might commit outrages from which he had himself constantly abstained. He accordingly declared that he had no concern in the "Narrative," that he disapproved of it, and that, if he answered the remarks, he would answer them like a gentleman; and he took care to communicate this to Dennis. Pope was bitterly mortified, and to this transaction we are inclined to ascribe the hatred with which he ever after regarded Addison.

[1] Horace, *Satires*, II. i. 55 ; Pope's imitation, ll. 86, 87.

[2] "Peripetia," that part of a drama in which the plot is unraveled and the whole concludes.

[3] Macaulay has not in the least exaggerated the worthlessness of Pope's performance.

In September, 1713, "The Guardian" ceased to appear. Steele had gone mad about politics. A general election had just taken place. He had been chosen member for Stockbridge, and he fully expected to play a first part in Parliament. The immense success of the "Tatler" and "Spectator" had turned his head. He had been the editor of both those papers, and was not aware how entirely they owed their influence and popularity to the genius of his friend. His spirits, always violent, were now excited by vanity, ambition, and faction to such a pitch that he every day committed some offense against good sense and good taste. All the discreet and moderate members of his own party regretted and condemned his folly. "I am in a thousand troubles," Addison wrote, "about poor Dick, and wish that his zeal for the public may not be ruinous to himself. But he has sent me word that he is determined to go on, and that any advice I may give him in this particular will have no weight with him."

Steele set up a political paper called "The Englishman,"[1] which, as it was not supported by contributions from Addison, completely failed. By this work, by some other writings of the same kind, and by the airs which he gave himself at the first meeting of the new Parliament, he made the Tories so angry that they determined to expel him.[2] The Whigs stood by him gallantly, but were unable to save him. The vote of expulsion was regarded by all dispassionate men as a tyrannical exercise of the power of the majority. But Steele's violence and folly, though they by no means justified the steps which his enemies took, had

[1] It ran 56 numbers, beginning October 6, 1713.

[2] He was expelled March 18, 1714.

completely disgusted his friends; nor did he ever regain the place which he had held in the public estimation.

Addison about this time conceived the design of adding an eighth volume to "The Spectator." In June, 1714, the first number of the new series appeared, and during about six months three papers were published weekly.[1] Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between "The Englishman" and the eighth volume of "The Spectator," between Steele without Addison and Addison without Steele. "The Englishman" is forgotten, — the eighth volume of "The Spectator" contains, perhaps, the finest essays, both serious and playful, in the English language.

Before this volume was completed, the death of Anne[2] produced an entire change in the administration of public affairs. The blow fell suddenly. It found the Tory party distracted by internal feuds, and unprepared for any great effort. Harley had just been disgraced. Bolingbroke, it was supposed, would be the chief minister. But the Queen was on her death-bed before the white staff had been given, and her last public act was to deliver it with a feeble hand to the Duke of Shrewsbury. The emergency produced a coalition between all sections of public men who were attached to the Protestant succession. George I. was proclaimed without opposition. A council, in which the leading Whigs had seats, took the direction of affairs till the new King should arrive. The first act of the lords justices was to appoint Addison their secretary.

[1] From Friday, June 18, to Monday, December 20, 1714, 79 numbers.

[2] August, 1714.

There is an idle tradition that he was directed to prepare a letter to the King; that he could not satisfy himself as to the style of this composition, and that the lords justices called in a clerk, who at once did what was wanted. It is not strange that a story so flattering to mediocrity should be popular, and we are sorry to deprive dunces of their consolation. But the truth must be told. It was well observed by Sir James Mackintosh,[1] whose knowledge of these times was unequaled, that Addison never, in any official document, affected wit or eloquence, and that his dispatches are, without exception, remarkable for unpretending simplicity. Everybody who knows with what ease Addison's finest essays were produced must be convinced that, if well-turned phrases had been wanted, he would have had no difficulty in finding them. We are, however, inclined to believe that the story is not absolutely without a foundation. It may well be that Addison did not know, till he had consulted experienced clerks who remembered the time when William III. was absent on the Continent, in what form a letter from the Council of Regency to the King ought to be drawn. We think it very likely that the ablest statesmen of our time — Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, for example — would, in similar circumstances, be found quite as ignorant. Every office has some little mysteries which the dullest man may learn with a little attention, and which the greatest man cannot possibly know by intuition. One paper must be signed by the chief of the department; another by his deputy;

[1] 1765–1832. Statesman, essayist, and historian. See Macaulay's essay on him. He wrote a work on the Revolution of 1688.

to a third the royal sign manual is necessary. One communication is to be registered, and another is not. One sentence must be in black ink, and another in red ink. If the ablest secretary for Ireland were moved to the India Board,[1] if the ablest president of the India Board were moved to the War Office, he would require instruction on points like these; and we do not doubt that Addison required such instruction when he became, for the first time, secretary to the lords justices.

George I. took possession of his kingdom without opposition. A new ministry was formed, and a new Parliament favorable to the Whigs chosen. Sunderland was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, and Addison again went to Dublin as chief secretary.

At Dublin, Swift resided; and there was much speculation about the way in which the Dean and the Secretary would behave towards each other. The relations which existed between these remarkable men form an interesting and pleasing portion of literary history. They had early attached themselves to the same political party and to the same patrons. While Anne's Whig ministry was in power, the visits of Swift to London, and the official residence of Addison in Ireland, had given them opportunities of knowing each other. They were the two shrewdest observers of their age, but their observations on each other had led them to favorable conclusions. Swift did full justice to the rare powers of conversation which were latent under the bashful deportment of Addison. Addison, on the other hand, discerned much good nature under the severe look and manner

[1] The administration of India did not pass from the East India Company to the Crown until 1858.

of Swift; and, indeed, the Swift of 1708 and the Swift of 1738[1] were two very different men.

But the paths of the two friends diverged widely. The Whig statesmen loaded Addison with solid benefits. They praised Swift, asked him to dinner, and did nothing more for him. His profession laid them under a difficulty. In the State they could not promote him, and they had reason to fear that, by bestowing preferment in the Church on the author of "The Tale of a Tub,"[2] they might give scandal to the public, which had no high opinion of their orthodoxy. He did not make fair allowance for the difficulties which prevented Halifax and Somers from serving him, thought himself an ill-used man, sacrificed honor and consistency to revenge, joined the Tories, and became their most formidable champion. He soon found, however, that his old friends were less to blame than he had supposed. The dislike with which the Queen and the heads of the Church regarded him was insurmountable; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he obtained an ecclesiastical dignity of no great value, on condition of fixing his residence in a country which he detested.

Difference of political opinion had produced, not, indeed, a quarrel, but a coolness, between Swift and Addison. They at length ceased altogether to see each other. Yet there was between them a tacit compact like that between the hereditary guests[3] in the "Iliad:" —

[1] At the latter date Swift had suffered impairment of his mental powers and had become more moody and misanthropical.

[2] A powerful satire by Swift, written in the High Church interest, but in such a way as to shock many readers.

[3] Glaucus and Diomed.

Ἔγχεα δ' ἀλλήλων ἀλεώμεθα καὶ δὶ ὁμίλου·
Πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοί τ' ἐπίκουροι,
Κτείνειν, ὅν κε δεός γε πόρῃ καὶ ποσσὶ κιχείω,
Πολλοὶ δ' αὖ σοὶ Ἀχαιοὶ, ἐναιρέμεν, ὅν κε δύνηαι.[1]

Iliad, Lib. VI. 226–229.

It is not strange that Addison, who calumniated and insulted nobody, should not have calumniated or insulted Swift; but it is remarkable that Swift, to whom neither genius nor virtue was sacred, and who generally seemed to find, like most other renegades, a peculiar pleasure in attacking old friends, should have shown so much respect and tenderness to Addison.

Fortune had now changed. The accession of the house of Hanover had secured in England the liberties of the people, and in Ireland the dominion of the Protestant caste. To that caste Swift was more odious than any other man. He was hooted and even pelted in the streets of Dublin, and could not venture to ride along the strand for his health without the attendance of armed servants. Many whom he had formerly served now libeled and insulted him. At this time Addison arrived. He had been advised not to show the smallest civility to the Dean of St. Patrick's. He had answered, with admirable spirit, that it might be necessary for men whose fidelity to their party was suspected to hold no intercourse with political opponents, but that one who had been a steady Whig in the worst times might venture, when the good cause was triumphant, to shake hands with an

[1] "Enough of Trojans to this lance shall yield,
In the full harvest of yon ample field;
Enough of Greeks shall dye thy spear with gore;
But thou and Diomed be foes no more."

POPE.

old friend who was one of the vanquished Tories. His kindness was soothing to the proud and cruelly wounded spirit of Swift, and the two great satirists resumed their habits of friendly intercourse.

Those associates of Addison whose political opinions agreed with his shared his good fortune. He took Tickell[1] with him to Ireland. He procured for Budgell a lucrative place in the same kingdom. Ambrose Philips was provided for in England.[2] Steele had injured himself so much by his eccentricity and perverseness that he obtained but a very small part of what he thought his due. He was, however, knighted; he had a place in the household;[3] and he subsequently received other marks of favor from the court.

Addison did not remain long in Ireland. In 1715 he quitted his secretaryship for a seat at the Board of Trade. In the same year his comedy of "The Drummer" was brought on the stage. The name of the author was not announced. The piece was coldly received, and some critics have expressed a doubt whether it were really Addison's. To us the evidence, both external and internal, seems decisive. It is not in Addison's best manner, but it contains numerous passages which no other writer known to us could have produced. It was again performed after Addison's death, and, being known to be his, was loudly applauded.

[1] As private secretary.

[2] Budgell was clerk and under-secretary to Addison and afterwards comptroller of the Irish revenue; Johnson says Philips was made only a lottery commissioner and justice of the peace.

[3] Surveyor of the royal stables, but he got several other favors. See Aitkin's *Life*.

Towards the close of the year 1715, while the Rebellion was still raging in Scotland,[1] Addison published the first number of a paper called "The Freeholder."[2] Among his political works "The Freeholder" is entitled to the first place. Even in "The Spectator" there are few serious papers nobler than the character of his friend Lord Somers, and certainly no satirical papers superior to those in which the Tory fox-hunter is introduced. This character is the original of Squire Western,[3] and is drawn with all Fielding's force, and with a delicacy of which Fielding was altogether destitute. As none of Addison's works exhibit stronger marks of his genius than "The Freeholder," so none does more honor to his moral character. It is difficult to extol too highly the candor and humanity of a political writer whom even the excitement of civil war cannot hurry into unseemly violence. Oxford, it is well known, was then the stronghold of Toryism. The High Street had been repeatedly lined with bayonets in order to keep down the disaffected gownsmen; and traitors pursued by the messengers of the government had been concealed in the garrets of several colleges. Yet the admonition which, even under such circumstances, Addison addressed to the university, is singularly gentle, respectful, and even affectionate; indeed, he could not find it in his heart to deal harshly even with imaginary persons. His fox-hunter, though ignorant, stupid, and violent, is at heart a good fellow, and is at last reclaimed by the clemency of the King. Steele was dissatisfied with his friend's moderation,

[1] Instigated by the Old Pretender and his followers.

[2] See page 126, note 6.

[3] In Fielding's *Tom Jones*.

and, though he acknowledged that "The Freeholder" was excellently written, complained that the ministry played on a lute when it was necessary to blow the trumpet. He accordingly determined to execute a flourish after his own fashion, and tried to rouse the public spirit of the nation by means of a paper called the "Town Talk," which is now as utterly forgotten as his "Englishman," as his "Crisis," as his "Letter to the Bailiff of Stockbridge," as his "Reader;" in short, as everything that he wrote without the help of Addison.[1]

In the same year in which "The Drummer" was acted, and in which the first numbers of "The Freeholder" appeared, the estrangement of Pope and Addison became complete. Addison had from the first seen that Pope was false and malevolent. Pope had discovered that Addison was jealous. The discovery was made in a strange manner. Pope had written "The Rape of the Lock," in two cantos, without supernatural machinery. These two cantos had been loudly applauded, and by none more loudly than by Addison. Then Pope thought of the sylphs and gnomes, Ariel, Momentilla, Crispissa, and Umbriel, and resolved to interweave the Rosicrucian[2] mythol-

[1] A thoroughly exaggerated statement which will be objected to even by persons who are not particularly attracted to Steele. *Town Talk* ran from December 17, 1714, to February 13, 1715–16. *The Reader* appeared in 1714 and reached only nine numbers. *The Crisis* appeared in 1714; the *Letter to the Bailiff* in 1713. Professor Morley has reprinted *The Crisis* in his *Famous Pamphlets* ("Universal Library").

[2] In 1614 there was an anonymous work published in Germany with the avowed object of testing the pretensions of a certain order known as Rosicrucians, which was said to have been founded by Christian Rosenkreutz, in the fifteenth century.

ogy with the original fabric. He asked Addison's advice. Addison said that the poem as it stood was a delicious little thing, and entreated Pope not to run the risk of marring what was so excellent in trying to mend it. Pope afterwards declared that this insidious counsel first opened his eyes to the baseness of him who gave it.[1]

Now there can be no doubt that Pope's plan was most ingenious, and that he afterwards executed it with great skill and success; but does it necessarily follow that Addison's advice was bad? And, if Addison's advice was bad, does it necessarily follow that it was given from bad motives? If a friend were to ask us whether we would advise him to risk his all in a lottery of which the chances were ten to one against him, we should do our best to dissuade him from running such a risk. Even if he were so lucky as to get the thirty thousand pound prize, we should not admit that we had counseled him ill, and we should certainly think it the height of injustice in him to accuse us of having been actuated by malice. We think Addison's advice good advice. It rested on a sound principle, the result of long and wide experience. The general rule undoubtedly is, that, when a successful work of imagination has been produced, it should not be recast. We cannot at this moment call to mind a single instance in which this rule has been transgressed with happy effect, except

Their founder was supposed to have got various wonderful secrets (such as the art of making gold, etc.) from the East, and these mysteries his disciples practiced. The whole thing seems to have been a joke, but it was taken seriously and quite a literature *pro* and *con* sprang up about it.

[1] Greene, who included Macaulay's essay in his edition of Addison, says that this statement comes from Warburton.

the instance of "The Rape of the Lock." Tasso recast his "Jerusalem." Akenside[1] recast his "Pleasures of the Imagination" and his "Epistle to Curio." Pope himself, emboldened no doubt by the success with which he had expanded and remodeled "The Rape of the Lock," made the same experiment on "The Dunciad." All these attempts failed. Who was to foresee that Pope would, once in his life, be able to do what he could not himself do twice, and what nobody else has ever done?

Addison's advice was good; but, had it been bad, why should we pronounce it dishonest? Scott tells us that one of his best friends predicted the failure of "Waverley." Herder[2] adjured Goethe not to take so unpromising a subject as Faust. Hume tried to dissuade Robertson from writing "The History of Charles the Fifth." Nay, Pope himself was one of those who prophesied that "Cato" would never succeed on the stage, and advised Addison to print it without risking a representation. But Scott, Goethe, Robertson, Addison, had the good sense and generosity to give their advisers credit for the best intentions. Pope's heart was not of the same kind with theirs.

In 1715, while he was engaged in translating the "Iliad," he met Addison at a coffee-house. Philips and Budgell were there; but their sovereign got rid of them, and asked Pope to dine with him alone. After dinner, Addison said that he lay under a dif-

[1] Dr. Mark Akenside (1721–1770), poet and physician, was once much more famous than he is to-day. Smollett satirized him in *Peregrine Pickle.*

[2] Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), a celebrated philosopher, critic, and poet.

ficulty which he wished to explain. "Tickell," he said, "translated some time ago the first book of the 'Iliad.' I have promised to look it over and correct it. I cannot therefore ask to see yours, for that would be double-dealing." Pope made a civil reply, and begged that his second book might have the advantage of Addison's revision. Addison readily agreed, looked over the second book, and sent it back with warm commendations.

Tickell's version of the first book appeared soon after this conversation. In the preface, all rivalry was earnestly disclaimed. Tickell declared that he should not go on with the "Iliad." That enterprise he should leave to powers which he admitted to be superior to his own. His only view, he said, in publishing this specimen, was to bespeak the favor of the public to a translation of the "Odyssey" in which he had made some progress.

Addison, and Addison's devoted followers, pronounced both the versions good, but maintained that Tickell's had more of the original. The town gave a decided preference to Pope's. We do not think it worth while to settle such a question of precedence. Neither of the rivals can be said to have translated the "Iliad," unless, indeed, the word "translation" be used in the sense which it bears in the "Midsummer Night's Dream."[1] When Bottom makes his appearance with an ass's head instead of his own, Peter Quince exclaims, "Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated." In this sense, undoubtedly, the readers of either Pope or Tickell may very properly exclaim, "Bless thee, Homer! thou art translated indeed."[2]

[1] See Act III. Scene i. line 121.

[2] This clever bit of humorous criticism should not blind the

Our readers will, we hope, agree with us in thinking that no man in Addison's situation could have acted more fairly and kindly, both towards Pope and towards Tickell, than he appears to have done. But an odious suspicion had sprung up in the mind of Pope. He fancied, and he soon firmly believed, that there was a deep conspiracy against his fame and his fortunes. The work on which he had staked his reputation was to be depreciated. The subscription, on which rested his hopes of a competence, was to be defeated. With this view, Addison had made a rival translation; Tickell had consented to father it; and the wits of Button's had united to puff it.

Is there any external evidence to support this grave accusation? The answer is short. There is absolutely none.

Was there any internal evidence which proved Addison to be the author of this version? Was it a work which Tickell was incapable of producing? Surely not. Tickell was a fellow of a college at Oxford,[1] and must be supposed to have been able to construe the "Iliad;" and he was a better versifier than his friend. We are not aware that Pope pretended to have discovered any turns of expression peculiar to Addison. Had such turns of expression been discovered, they would be sufficiently accounted for by supposing Addison to have corrected his friend's lines, as he owned that he had done.

Is there anything in the character of the accused persons which makes the accusation probable? We answer confidently, Nothing. Tickell was long after

student to the real merits of Pope's *Homer* viewed as a poem *per se*, not as a translation.

[1] Queen's College.

this time described by Pope himself as a very fair and worthy man. Addison had been, during many years, before the public. Literary rivals, political opponents, had kept their eyes on him. But neither envy nor faction, in their utmost rage, had ever imputed to him a single deviation from the laws of honor and of social morality. Had he been, indeed, a man meanly jealous of fame, and capable of stooping to base and wicked arts for the purpose of injuring his competitors, would his vices have remained latent so long? He was a writer of tragedy: had he ever injured Rowe? He was a writer of comedy: had he not done ample justice to Congreve, and given valuable help to Steele? He was a pamphleteer: have not his good nature and generosity been acknowledged by Swift, his rival in fame and his adversary in politics?

That Tickell should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. That Addison should have been guilty of a villany seems to us highly improbable. But that these two men should have conspired together to commit a villany seems to us improbable in a tenfold degree. All that is known to us of their intercourse tends to prove that it was not the intercourse of two accomplices in crime. These are some of the lines in which Tickell poured forth his sorrow over the coffin of Addison: —

> "Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,
> A task well suited to thy gentle mind?
> Oh, if, sometimes thy spotless form descend,
> To me thine aid, thou guardian genius, lend.
> When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,
> When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,
> In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,
> And turn from ill a frail and feeble heart;

> Lead through the paths thy virtue trod before,
> Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more." [1]

In what words, we should like to know, did this guardian genius invite his pupil to join in a plan such as the editor of "The Satirist" would hardly dare to propose to the editor of "The Age"?[2]

We do not accuse Pope of bringing an accusation which he knew to be false. We have not the smallest doubt that he believed it to be true, and the evidence on which he believed it he found in his own bad heart. His own life was one long series of tricks as mean and as malicious as that of which he suspected Addison and Tickell. He was all stiletto and mask. To injure, to insult, and to save himself from the consequences of injury and insult by lying and equivocating, was the habit of his life. He published a lampoon on the Duke of Chandos;[3] he was taxed with it, and he lied and equivocated. He published a lampoon on Aaron Hill;[4] he was taxed with it, and he lied and equivocated. He published a still fouler lampoon on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu;[5] he was

[1] See page 217, text and note 1.

[2] Low London papers of Macaulay's day.

[3] See *Moral Essays*, iv. 99. Pope, in a note to *Moral Essays*, iii., denied that he meant to ridicule "a worthy nobleman merely for his bad taste." James Bridges, first Duke of Chandos, (1673–1744).

[4] Aaron Hill (1685–1750) was a dramatist and small poet and manager of the opera house. Pope is supposed to have referred to him in *The Dunciad*, ii. 295–298. Pope denied the reference, though on the whole his remarks were complimentary, which makes one question Macaulay's use of "lampoon" unless he had another passage in mind.

[5] This probably refers to *Moral Essays*, ii., where Lady Mary is said to figure as Sappho; or to the imitation of the Second Satire of Horace's Second Book, lines 49–60. Lady Mary replied

taxed with it, and he lied with more than usual effrontery and vehemence. He puffed himself and abused his enemies under feigned names. He robbed himself of his own letters, and then raised the hue and cry after them. Besides his frauds of malignity, of fear, of interest, and of vanity, there were frauds which he seems to have committed from love of fraud alone. He had a habit of stratagem, a pleasure in outwitting all who came near him. Whatever his object might be, the indirect road to it was that which he preferred. For Bolingbroke, Pope undoubtedly felt as much love and veneration as it was in his nature to feel for any human being; yet Pope was scarcely dead when it was discovered that, from no motive except the mere love of artifice, he had been guilty of an act of gross perfidy to Bolingbroke.[1]

Nothing was more natural than that such a man as this should attribute to others that which he felt within himself. A plain, probable, coherent explanation is frankly given to him: he is certain that it is all a romance. A line of conduct scrupulously fair, and even friendly, is pursued towards him: he is convinced that it is merely a cover for a vile intrigue by which he is to be disgraced and ruined. It is vain to ask him for proofs. He has none, and wants none, except those which he carries in his own bosom.

Whether Pope's malignity at length provoked Addison to retaliate for the first and last time, cannot

in kind, and so deserves very little sympathy. Pope has ever since been known as "the wicked wasp of Twickenham."

[1] The printing without permission and with alterations certain letters of Bolingbroke's. For all these points about Pope see the Life by Courthope in the Elwin-Courthope edition.

now be known with certainty. We have only Pope's story, which runs thus: a pamphlet appeared containing some reflections which stung Pope to the quick. What those reflections were, and whether they were reflections of which he had a right to complain, we have now no means of deciding. The Earl of Warwick,[1] a foolish and vicious lad, who regarded Addison with the feelings with which such lads generally regard their best friends, told Pope, truly or falsely, that this pamphlet had been written by Addison's direction. When we consider what a tendency stories have to grow in passing even from one honest man to another honest man, and when we consider that to the name of honest man neither Pope nor the Earl of Warwick had a claim, we are not disposed to attach much importance to this anecdote.

It is certain, however, that Pope was furious. He had already sketched the character of Atticus in prose. In his anger he turned this prose into the brilliant and energetic lines which everybody knows by heart, or ought to know by heart, and sent them to Addison.[2] One charge which Pope has enforced

[1] Afterwards Addison's step-son.

[2] The lines, first printed in connection with other verses in 1723, are 193–214 of the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735):—

> "Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
> True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
> Blest with each talent and each art to please,
> And born to write, converse and live with ease:
> Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
> Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
> View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike
> Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
> A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;

with great skill is probably not without foundation. Addison was, we are inclined to believe, too fond of presiding over a circle of humble friends. Of the other imputations which these famous lines are intended to convey, scarcely one has ever been proved to be just, and some are certainly false. That Addison was not in the habit of "damning with faint praise" appears from innumerable passages in his writings, and from none more than from those in which he mentions Pope. And it is not merely unjust, but ridiculous, to describe a man who made the fortune of almost every one of his intimate friends as "so obliging that he ne'er obliged."

That Addison felt the sting of Pope's satire keenly, we cannot doubt; that he was conscious of one of the weaknesses with which he was reproached, is highly probable: but his heart, we firmly believe, acquitted him of the gravest part of the accusation. He acted like himself. As a satirist, he was at his own weapons more than Pope's match, and he would have been at no loss for topics. A distorted and diseased body, tenanted by a yet more distorted and diseased mind; spite and envy thinly disguised by sentiments as benevolent and noble as those which Sir Peter Teazle admired in Mr. Joseph Surface;[1] a feeble, sickly licentiousness; an odious love of filthy and noisome images, — these were things which a genius

> Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieged,
> And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
> Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
> And sit attentive to his own applause,
> While wits and templars every sentence raise,
> And wonder with a foolish face of praise:
> Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

[1] Characters in Sheridan's *School for Scandal*.

less powerful than that to which we owe "The Spectator" could easily have held up to the mirth and hatred of mankind. Addison had, moreover, at his command other means of vengeance, which a bad man would not have scrupled to use. He was powerful in the State. Pope was a Catholic, and in those times a minister would have found it easy to harass the most innocent Catholic by innumerable petty vexations. Pope, near twenty years later, said that "through the lenity of the government alone he could live with comfort." "Consider," he exclaimed, "the injury that a man of high rank and credit may do to a private person, under penal laws and many other disadvantages." It is pleasing to reflect that the only revenge which Addison took was to insert in "The Freeholder"[1] a warm encomium on the translation of the "Iliad," and to exhort all lovers of learning to put down their names as subscribers. There could be no doubt, he said, from the specimens already published, that the masterly hand of Pope would do as much for Homer as Dryden had done for Virgil. From that time to the end of his life, he always treated Pope, by Pope's own acknowledgment, with justice. Friendship was, of course, at an end.

One reason which induced the Earl of Warwick to play the ignominious part of tale-bearer on this occasion may have been his dislike of the marriage which was about to take place between his mother and Addison. The countess dowager,[2] a daughter of the

[1] No. 40.

[2] Charlotte, daughter of Sir Thomas Middleton, married Edward Rich, third Earl of Holland and sixth Earl of Warwick. She had by him a son, Edward Henry Rich (the Earl of Warwick of the text), who died unmarried in 1721. The countess died in 1731, leaving one daughter by Addison.

old and honorable family of the Middletons of Chirk, a family which in any country but ours would be called noble, resided at Holland House.[1] Addison had, during some years, occupied at Chelsea a small dwelling, once the abode of Nell Gwynn.[2] Chelsea is now a district of London, and Holland House may be called a town residence; but, in the days of Anne and George I., milkmaids and sportsmen wandered between green hedges, and over fields bright with daisies, from Kensington almost to the shore of the Thames. Addison and Lady Warwick were country neighbors, and became intimate friends. The great wit and scholar tried to allure the young lord from the fashionable amusements of beating watchmen, breaking windows, and rolling women in hogsheads down Holborn Hill, to the study of letters and the practice of virtue. These well-meant exertions did little good, however, either to the disciple or to the master. Lord Warwick grew up a rake, and Addison fell in love. The mature beauty of the countess has been celebrated by poets [3] in language which, after a very large allowance has been made for flattery, would lead us to believe that she was a fine woman; and her rank doubtless heightened her attractions. The courtship was long. The hopes of the lover appear to have risen and fallen with the fortunes of his party. His attachment was at length matter of such notoriety that, when he visited Ireland for the last time, Rowe addressed some

[1] See Hare's *Walks in London;* Macaulay's essay on Lord Holland; and passages in the *Life and Letters.*

[2] The famous mistress of Charles II., who died in 1691 at about fifty.

[3] See, for example, the lines by Leonard Welsted, prefixed to Addison's *Drummer.*

consolatory verses to the Chloe of Holland House. It strikes us as a little strange that in these verses Addison should be called Lycidas, a name of singularly evil omen for a swain just about to cross St. George's Channel.[1]

At length Chloe capitulated. Addison was, indeed, able to treat with her on equal terms. He had reason to expect preferment even higher than that which he had attained. He had inherited the fortune of a brother[2] who died governor of Madras. He had purchased an estate in Warwickshire, and had been welcomed to his domain in very tolerable verse by one of the neighboring squires, the poetical fox-hunter, William Somerville.[3] In August, 1716, the newspapers announced that Joseph Addison, Esq., famous for many excellent works both in verse and prose, had espoused the Countess Dowager of Warwick.

He now fixed his abode at Holland House, a house which can boast of a greater number of inmates distinguished in political and literary history than any other private dwelling in England. His portrait still hangs there. The features are pleasing; the complexion is remarkably fair; but in the expression we trace rather the gentleness of his disposition than the force and keenness of his intellect.

Not long after his marriage he reached the height of civil greatness. The Whig government had, during some time, been torn by internal dissensions.

[1] The reference is, of course, to Milton's *Lycidas*, which was written in memory of Edward King, who had been drowned in a voyage to Ireland.

[2] Gulstone Addison.

[3] 1667–1742. He is chiefly remembered for his blank-verse poem *The Chase*, in which he described his favorite pursuit.

Lord Townshend[1] led one section of the cabinet, Lord Sunderland the other. At length, in the spring of 1717, Sunderland triumphed. Townshend retired from office, and was accompanied by Walpole and Cowper. Sunderland proceeded to reconstruct the ministry, and Addison was appointed secretary of state. It is certain that the seals were pressed upon him, and were at first declined by him. Men equally versed in official business might easily have been found; and his colleagues knew that they could not expect assistance from him in debate. He owed his elevation to his popularity, to his stainless probity, and to his literary fame.

But scarcely had Addison entered the cabinet when his health began to fail. From one serious attack he recovered in the autumn; and his recovery was celebrated in Latin verses, worthy of his own pen, by Vincent Bourne, who was then at Trinity College, Cambridge. A relapse soon took place, and in the following spring Addison was prevented by a severe asthma from discharging the duties of his post. He resigned it, and was succeeded by his friend Craggs,[2] a young man whose natural parts, though little improved by cultivation, were quick and showy, whose graceful person and winning manners had made him generally acceptable in society, and who, if he had lived, would probably have been the most formidable of all the rivals of Walpole.

As yet there was no Joseph Hume.[3] The minis-

[1] Charles, Viscount Townshend (1676–1738), Secretary of State at the accession of George I. He was Walpole's brother-in-law, and had a breach with him later in his career.

[2] James Craggs (died in 1720, aged thirty-five). See his Epitaph by Pope.

[3] 1777–1855; a member of Parliament indefatigable in at-

ters, therefore, were able to bestow on Addison a retiring pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year. In what form this pension was given, we are not told by the biographers, and have not time to inquire; but it is certain that Addison did not vacate his seat in the House of Commons.

Rest of mind and body seemed to have reëstablished his health, and he thanked God, with cheerful piety, for having set him free both from his office and from his asthma. Many years seemed to be before him; and he meditated many works, — a tragedy on the death of Socrates, a translation of the Psalms, a treatise on the evidences of Christianity. Of this last performance, a part, which we could well spare, has come down to us.

But the fatal complaint soon returned, and gradually prevailed against all the resources of medicine. It is melancholy to think that the last months of such a life should have been overclouded both by domestic and by political vexations. A tradition which began early, which has been generally received, and to which we have nothing to oppose, has represented his wife as an arrogant and imperious woman. It is said that, till his health failed him, he was glad to escape from the countess dowager and her magnificent dining-room, blazing with the gilded devices of the house of Rich,[1] to some tavern where he could enjoy a laugh, a talk about Virgil and Boileau, and a bottle of claret, with the friends of his happier days. All those friends, however, were not left to him. Sir Richard

tacking financial abuses and in pushing on reforms of every sort.

[1] That is, Holland House, so called because the Earl of Holland, who gave it its name, was Henry Rich.

Steele had been gradually estranged by various causes. He considered himself as one who, in evil times, had braved martyrdom for his political principles, and demanded, when the Whig party was triumphant, a large compensation for what he had suffered when it was militant. The Whig leaders took a very different view of his claims. They thought that he had, by his own petulance and folly, brought them as well as himself into trouble, and, though they did not absolutely neglect him, doled out favors to him with a sparing hand. It was natural that he should be angry with them, and especially angry with Addison. But what, above all, seems to have disturbed Sir Richard was the elevation of Tickell, who at thirty was made by Addison undersecretary of state; while the editor of the "Tatler" and "Spectator," the author of "The Crisis," the member for Stockbridge, who had been persecuted for firm adherence to the house of Hanover, was, at near fifty, forced, after many solicitations and complaints, to content himself with a share in the patent of Drury Lane Theatre. Steele himself says, in his celebrated letter to Congreve,[1] that Addison, by his preference of Tickell, "incurred the warmest resentment of other gentlemen;" and everything seems to indicate that, of those resentful gentlemen, Steele was himself one.

While poor Sir Richard was brooding over what he considered as Addison's unkindness, a new cause of quarrel arose. The Whig party, already divided against itself, was rent by a new schism. The celebrated bill for limiting the number of peers had been brought in. The proud Duke of Somerset, first in

[1] Occasioned by the publication of Tickell's edition of Addison.

rank of all the nobles whose religion permitted them to sit in Parliament, was the ostensible author of the measure; but it was supported, and in truth devised, by the prime minister.[1]

We are satisfied that the bill was most pernicious, and we fear that the motives which induced Sunderland to frame it were not honorable to him; but we cannot deny that it was supported by many of the best and wisest men of that age. Nor was this strange. The royal prerogative had, within the memory of the generation then in the vigor of life, been so grossly abused that it was still regarded with a jealousy which, when the peculiar situation of the house of Brunswick[2] is considered, may perhaps be called immoderate. The particular prerogative of creating peers had, in the opinion of the Whigs, been grossly abused by Queen Anne's last ministry;[3] and even the Tories admitted that her Majesty, in swamping, as it has since been called, the Upper House, had done what only an extreme case could justify. The theory of the English Constitution, according to many high authorities, was, that three independent powers — the sovereign, the nobility, and the commons — ought constantly to act as checks on each other. If this theory were sound, it seemed to follow that to put one of these powers under the absolute control of the other two was absurd. But, if the number of peers were unlimited, it could not well be denied that the Upper House was under the absolute control of

[1] Macaulay refers to Lord Sunderland, who was in power with Lord Stanhope (1719).

[2] That is, of Hanover. George I. was Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg.

[3] Twelve Tory peers had been created in December, 1711, to counterbalance the Whig majority in the House of Lords.

the Crown and the Commons, and was indebted only to their moderation for any power which it might be suffered to retain.

Steele took part with the Opposition, Addison with the Ministers. Steele, in a paper called "The Plebeian,"[1] vehemently attacked the bill. Sunderland called for help on Addison, and Addison obeyed the call. In a paper called "The Old Whig,"[2] he answered, and indeed refuted, Steele's arguments. It seems to us that the premises of both the controversialists were unsound; that on those premises Addison reasoned well and Steele ill; and that consequently Addison brought out a false conclusion, while Steele blundered upon the truth. In style, in wit, and in politeness Addison maintained his superiority, though "The Old Whig" is by no means one of his happiest performances.

At first, both the anonymous opponents observed the laws of propriety. But at length Steele so far forgot himself as to throw an odious imputation on the morals of the chiefs of the administration. Addison replied with severity, but, in our opinion, with less severity than was due to so grave an offense against morality and decorum; nor did he, in his just anger, forget for a moment the laws of good taste and good breeding. One calumny which has been often repeated, and never yet contradicted, it is our duty to expose. It is asserted in the "Biographia Britannica" that Addison designated Steele as "little Dicky." This assertion was repeated by Johnson, who had never seen "The Old Whig" and was there-

[1] Begun March 14, 1718–19, four numbers published.

[2] Begun Thursday, March 19, 1718–19, only two numbers published.

fore excusable. It has also been repeated by Miss Aikin, who has seen "The Old Whig," and for whom, therefore, there is less excuse. Now, it is true that the words "little Dicky" occur in "The Old Whig," and that Steele's name was Richard. It is equally true that the words "little Isaac" occur in "The Duenna,"[1] and that Newton's name was Isaac. But we confidently affirm that Addison's little Dicky had no more to do with Steele than Sheridan's little Isaac with Newton. If we apply the words "little Dicky" to Steele, we deprive a very lively and ingenious passage, not only of all its wit, but of all its meaning. Little Dicky was the nickname of Henry Norris,[2] an actor of remarkably small stature but of great humor, who played the usurer Gomez, then a most popular part, in Dryden's "Spanish Friar."

The merited reproof which Steele had received, though softened by some kind and courteous expressions, galled him bitterly. He replied with little force and great acrimony, but no rejoinder appeared. Addison was fast hastening to his grave, and had, we may well suppose, little disposition to prosecute a quarrel with an old friend. His complaint had terminated in dropsy. He bore up long and manfully; but at length he abandoned all hope, dismissed his physicians, and calmly prepared himself to die.

His works he intrusted to the care of Tickell,[3] and dedicated them, a very few days before his death, to Craggs, in a letter written with the sweet and grace-

[1] A comic opera (1775) by Sheridan.

[2] Died 1733. He was a good comedian, and was known as "Jubilee Dicky," from his impersonation of a character in Farquhar's *Constant Couple.*

[3] Who edited them in 1721. The letter to Craggs was prefixed to this edition.

ful eloquence of a Saturday's "Spectator." In this his last composition he alluded to his approaching end in words so manly, so cheerful, and so tender that it is difficult to read them without tears. At the same time, he earnestly recommended the interests of Tickell to the care of Craggs.

Within a few hours of the time at which this dedication was written, Addison sent to beg Gay,[1] who was then living by his wits about town, to come to Holland House. Gay went, and was received with great kindness. To his amazement, his forgiveness was implored by the dying man. Poor Gay, the most good-natured and simple of mankind, could not imagine what he had to forgive. There was, however, some wrong, the remembrance of which weighed on Addison's mind, and which he declared himself anxious to repair. He was in a state of extreme exhaustion, and the parting was doubtless a friendly one on both sides. Gay supposed that some plan to serve him had been in agitation at court, and had been frustrated by Addison's influence. Nor is this improbable. Gay had paid assiduous court to the royal family. But in the Queen's days he had been the eulogist of Bolingbroke, and was still connected with many Tories. It is not strange that Addison, while heated by conflict, should have thought himself justified in obstructing the preferment of one whom he might regard as a political enemy. Neither is it strange that, when reviewing his whole life and earnestly scrutinizing all his motives, he should think that he had acted an unkind and ungenerous part in using his power against a distressed man of letters who was as harmless and as helpless as a child.

[1] See the essay on Johnson, page 13, note 1.

One inference may be drawn from this anecdote. It appears that Addison, on his death-bed, called himself to a strict account, and was not at ease till he had asked pardon for an injury which it was not even suspected that he had committed, — for an injury which would have caused disquiet only to a very tender conscience. Is it not, then, reasonable to infer that, if he had really been guilty of forming a base conspiracy against the fame and fortunes of a rival, he would have expressed some remorse for so serious a crime? But it is unnecessary to multiply arguments and evidence for the defense when there is neither argument nor evidence for the accusation.

The last moments of Addison were perfectly serene. His interview with his son-in-law is universally known. "See," he said, "how a Christian can die." The piety of Addison was, in truth, of a singularly cheerful character. The feeling which predominates in all his devotional writings is gratitude. God was to him the all-wise and all-powerful Friend who had watched over his cradle with more than maternal tenderness; who had listened to his cries before they could form themselves in prayer; who had preserved his youth from the snares of vice; who had made his cup run over with worldly blessings; who had doubled the value of those blessings by bestowing a thankful heart to enjoy them, and dear friends to partake them; who had rebuked the waves of the Ligurian gulf, had purified the autumnal air of the Campagna, and had restrained the avalanches of Mont Cenis. Of the Psalms, his favorite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd whose crook guides the flock safe through gloomy and desolate glens to meadows well watered

and rich with herbage.[1] On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life he relied in the hour of death with the love which casteth out fear. He died on the 17th of June, 1719. He had just entered on his forty-eighth year.

His body lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber,[2] and was borne thence to the Abbey at dead of night. The choir sang a funeral hymn. Bishop Atterbury,[3] one of those Tories who had loved and honored the most accomplished of the Whigs, met the corpse, and led the procession by torchlight round the shrine of St. Edward[4] and the graves of the Plantagenets to the chapel of Henry VII. On the north side of that chapel, in the vault of the house of Albemarle,[5] the coffin of Addison lies next to the coffin of Montague. Yet a few months, and the same mourners passed again along the same aisle. The same sad anthem was again chanted. The same vault was again opened, and the coffin of Craggs was placed close to the coffin of Addison.

Many tributes were paid to the memory of Addison, but one alone is now remembered. Tickell bewailed his friend in an elegy which would do honor

[1] Psalm twenty-third, which Addison versified in *The Spectator*, No. 441.

[2] See Hare's *Walks in London* for this noted chamber in Westminster Abbey, which perhaps gets its name from its tapestry, which described the history of Jerusalem.

[3] Francis Atterbury (1662–1732), Bishop of Rochester, noted for his wit and learning and for his zeal for the Jacobite cause, which led to his being exiled to France. See Macaulay's essay on him.

[4] The Confessor (1004–1066).

[5] George Monk (1608–1670), first Duke of Albemarle, prominent at the Restoration, was buried here.

to the greatest name in our literature, and which unites the energy and magnificence of Dryden to the tenderness and purity of Cowper.[1] This fine poem was prefixed to a superb edition of Addison's works which was published in 1721 by subscription. The names of the subscribers proved how widely his fame had been spread. That his countrymen should be eager to possess his writings, even in a costly form, is not wonderful; but it is wonderful that, though English literature was then little studied on the Continent, Spanish grandees, Italian prelates, marshals of France should be found in the list. Among the most remarkable names are those of the Queen of Sweden, of Prince Eugene, of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, of the Dukes of Parma, Modena, and Guastalla,[2] of the Doge of Genoa, of the Regent Orleans,[3] and of Cardinal Dubois. We ought to add that this edition, though eminently beautiful, is in some important points defective; nor, indeed, do we yet possess a complete collection of Addison's writings.

It is strange that neither his opulent and noble widow, nor any of his powerful and attached friends, should have thought of placing even a simple tablet,

[1] William Cowper (1731–1800), the author of *The Task*, whose lines to the memory of his mother on the receipt of her picture were in Macaulay's mind when he wrote his rather extravagant praise of Tickell's elegy. Dryden's magnificence may be seen in certain stanzas of his *Ode* in memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew, but will be looked for in vain in Tickell's lines, excellent though they be.

[2] All in northern Italy.

[3] Philippe, Duke of Orleans (1674–1723), Regent of France during the minority of Louis XV. His court was noted for its debaucheries. Cardinal Guillaume Dubois (1656–1723) was a famous minister of the same period. See Perkins's *France under the Regency*.

inscribed with his name, on the walls of the Abbey. It was not till three generations had laughed and wept over his pages that the omission was supplied by the public veneration. At length, in our own time, his image, skillfully graven, appeared in Poets' Corner. It represents him, as we can conceive him, — clad in his dressing-gown and freed from his wig, — stepping from his parlor at Chelsea into his trim little garden, with the account of "The Everlasting Club," or "The Loves of Hilpa and Shalum," just finished for the next day's "Spectator," in his hand. Such a mark of national respect was due to the unsullied statesman, to the accomplished scholar, to the master of pure English eloquence, to the consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue, after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism.

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